

THE  
MIRROR OF TASTE,  
AND  
DRAMATIC CENSOR.

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HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 73.]

WE are now to turn to **MOLIERE**, who figured on the stage as a comic actor as well as a dramatic poet, and whose name is immortalized by a number of comedies, to which the writers of his own and other countries have not scrupled to be indebted for the materials with which they have, with more or less success, attempted to build their fame.

John Baptiste Poquelin de Moliere was born at Paris in 1620. His father, who was a tapestry maker to the court, intended him for his own business. The boy, however, going frequently to the theatre, acquired such a taste for dramatic representations that his contempt for tapestry making prevailed, and he was sent under the Jesuits at the cottage of Clermont. Five years completed his education, and he next attended the lectures of Gassendi. He afterwards applied himself to the law; but after his father's death, he renounced all employments for the stage, and, uniting himself with a theatrical party patronized by Richelieu, he quitted the

name of Poequelin for Moliere. He joined an actress of the name of Bejart and accompanied her to Lyons, where (in 1653) he produced his first play, *l'Etourdi*, or the Plunderer, which was received with great applause. He afterwards performed at Languedoc and at Grenoble, and then settled at Rouen. He then went to Paris, and, being noticed by the duke of Conti, obtained through that prince's influence the king's permission to open a theatre (the third in Paris) *Au Petit Bourbon*, which he occupied with a company under him. It being necessary to pull down this theatre in order to build the grand entrance into the Louvre, the king took him into the palais royal, and gave to his company the title, first of *La Troupe de Monsieur*, and afterwards *La Troupe du Roi*.

In the year 1660, he published his *La Cocu Imaginaire*, for the plan of which he is indebted to an Italian comedy, *il Cornuto per Opinione*. Though it came out in the summer, while the court were absent from Paris, it was performed no less than forty nights in succession.—A very curious circumstance attended the first appearance of this comedy. A tradesman, in Paris, finding in the *Cocu Imaginaire* a pretty close picture of his own feelings, took it into his head that he was aimed at, and that the poet intended to affront him. "How dare the fellow," said he one day to an actor, "ridicule a man like me?"—"Come, come," said the actor, "you have no reason to complain; he has painted a flattering likeness by making you only a cuckold in imagination: I would not have you to make much more work about it, lest he should make a cuckold of you in reality."

In the following year Moliere brought out *Don Garcia de Navarre*, and performed the part of Don Garcia himself; but perceiving that serious acting was by no means his forte, he had the good sense to make a resolution not to perform any but comic parts from that time. This piece, which was an heroic comedy, though chastely written, did not succeed; and the reputation of Moliere, through the industry of his enemies, of whom he had at all times undeservedly a plentiful number, suffered for a time from this disgrace. A short time however: for the success of his next piece amply consoled him for the mortification he had sustained by the fall of this. *L'Ecole des Maris* made its appearance in 1661. It was the first piece that Moliere brought out at the theatre *du Palais Royal*, and the first that he printed. In quality of

chief of the company of Monsieur, he therefore dedicated this piece to that prince.

This comedy, which served as a model for English and other authors, is taken from a tale by Boccace, which every body knows. The only difference in the two plots is that, in Boccace, a woman in love with a young man makes her confessor the *go-between*, who carries letters and presents, under an idea that he serves the purposes of devotion; and, in Moliere, an old man is substituted for the confessor, who is duped in the same manner by the girl he is in love with, and to whom he is the tutor.

*L'Ecole des Femmes*, Moliere's next comedy, was performed for the first time in 1662. So divided began to be the French at this time as to Moliere, that under the idea, probably, of his commencing Aristophanes, and issuing personalities from the stage, whereas he in fact personated men only by personating manners, he sustained all sorts of affronts. The public were extremely divided as to the merit of this play. It gained ground, however, and brought a great deal of money. These cabals induced Moliere in the following year to write a piece which he called *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*.

This piece was the first of the kind that ever appeared on the French theatre. It is rather a dialogue than a comedy: Moliere, however, is to be commended for having written it; for he very happily, while he points out the faults of his play, turns its enemies into ridicule. The *Mercur Galant*, conducted by a man of the name of VISE, who was constantly sticking in Moliere's skirts, has the kindness thus to criticise his piece by anticipation.

"We are to see, in a short time, a piece intitled *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, where the author, *soi disant*, is to enumerate all the faults in his piece, and to excuse them at the same time.—It is curious that a man should take so much pains to defend a piece which is not his own, but written by the Abbe du Buisson, who is one of the most gallant men of the age. But Moliere has the audacity to deny this. He says, that the abbe certainly did write a piece on this subject, and bring it to him, and that he could not help allowing it considerable merit, though he had his reasons for not performing it. What does all this say? That this cunning comedian, whose best merit is to know how to take advantage,

discerned in the abbe's piece something that could please the public, and so palmed it upon them as his own."

The abbe might have written a piece upon this subject, but it was perfectly unnecessary that Moliere should copy that piece; for he had only to go to the same source whence the abbe derived his materials, which was a book intitled *Le Nuits faceticuses du Seigneur Straparole*; which is a history of a man who communicates to his friend all that passes between him and his mistress, not knowing that his friend is his rival.

But it now became pitiable to see pieces on the theatres in the shape of disjointed critiques; and really it is to be regretted, that Moliere, in imitation of the sun when the flies wanted to put him out, did not shine on instead of condescending to notice the swarm of tiny critics that surrounded him. As it was, the cabal against him, though it did not injure him, gave him great inconvenience; and more than one critique, which would have died away forgotten, became noticeable to the public by his pointing it out.

Boursault, a writer of real merit, and who was now coming forward, took occasion to render himself popular by bringing out at the hotel de Bourgogne, a piece called *Le Portrait du Peintre*, which was not only a critique of *l'Ecole des Femmes*, but produced at the same time; and contained, as far as he could learn or imagine, the same matter as Moliere's piece under that title. This was certainly no difficult matter; for nothing could be easier than to select the known and acknowledged faults of *l'Ecole des Femmes*, and excuse them exactly in the way that its author would do. This was what struck Boursault, who succeeded so well in his design that at last it was said, in addition to Moliere's having stolen his *Ecole des Femmes* from l'Abbe du Buisson, he stole his critique of *l'Ecole des Femmes* from Boursault!

Moliere now began really to be piqued; and he brought out in the same year his *Impromptu de Versailles*, levelled directly at Boursault, whom he treated with the greatest contempt and derision, reserving to himself, however, a degree of nobleness; for this contempt and this derision went no further than the genius and talents of Boursault, whereas Boursault has descended in his strictures on Moliere to attack his private character.

This piece also is a most severe and successful satire on the performers at the Hotel de Bourgogne, whom Moliere considers



as having instigated Boursault to ridicule him; and, indeed, though no one could commend this spirit of party between two bodies whose business was only to entertain the public, yet Moliere received and deserved great praise for the able manner in which he conducted this controversy; for in answer to their pitiful invectives, which he scorned to imitate, he contented himself with pointing out their faults as performers, particularly the sleepy monotony of their declamation; which he did with such judgment, that the ridicule which followed this discovery drove them into a corner, and they were obliged to correct their faults or be laughed at; and thus Moliere, in resenting a private injury, did a public benefit.

Boursault, whom I shall now introduce, was one of those extraordinary proofs that show us how infinitely genius ranks before education. He was born at Bourgogne in 1638, and died in Paris in 1701. We find him at the age of twenty-three bringing out successful comedies, and two years afterwards entering into a controversy with a man of Moliere's wonderful talents, though he could speak nothing but a provincial jargon called Patois, no more like French than Erse or Irish is to English, at thirteen, and had then first to learn to write, and afterwards to choose what language he should write in.

It was not long, however, after he came to Paris, which was in 1651, before he taught himself to write and speak French elegantly; and, what may appear very extraordinary, without knowing a word of Greek or Latin, his style was fraught with the native purity of the ancients. But I cannot find any thing irreconcilable in this. Nature taught them, nature taught him. Neither they nor he had been tainted with the foppery of the schools.

His conception was so strong, his ideas were so true, and his fancy was so pliant, that he had nothing to do but to think and write. His happy genius accommodated itself to every style. His tragedies manifest a firm mind and a strength of conception equal to a description of the noblest passions. His comedies contain lively pictures of men and manners, suitable to all ranks, all ages, and all times. He is serious, comic, moral, and lively, without violating the rules of taste.

It must now be recollected, that I am speaking of his best and latest productions. In his early ones there is certainly, and it would be wonderful if there were not, a great deal of trash; but there are

traits of genius every where; and he arrived at last to a taste so pure, and a style so chaste, that "he was correct without affectation," to use the words of various French writers, "and ought to be considered as the literary lawgiver to the language of that nation."

There is something so peculiar in a character of this description, that I cannot help dwelling on Boursault a little longer. His fame soon reached the court; and having, at the express desire of Lewis the Fourteenth, written a book called *La Veritable Etude des Souverains*, by the way a bold undertaking, the king was so charmed with it that he appointed him preceptor of Monseigneur; but he could not ratify the appointment, because Boursault knew nothing of Latin, an indispensable qualification for that post.

The dutchess of Angouleme made Boursault her secretary, and engaged him to write a weekly gazette in verse. Lewis and his court were greatly entertained with this work; but Boursault having aimed some satiric tracts against the Franciscans in general, and the Capuchins in particular, the queen's confessor used such powerful interest that the gazette was suppressed, and the author's pension of two thousand livres taken away; and had not very high friends interfered this poetical newsmonger would have gone to the bastille.

At the time Boursault had this controversy with Moliere, in which there is certainly a great deal of the vivacity and folly of a young man, he had, besides his *Portrait du Peintre*, brought out three pieces, all which succeeded. They had, however, glaring faults, but gave wonderful promise of something better.

As Moliere's career for the next ten years, at the end of which he died, makes up a very brilliant interval in the French drama, I shall follow it unmixed with any other circumstances but such as result from it, in order to do every justice to a man of such uncommon merit.

*La Princesse d'Elide* was performed in 1664, and made up a part of those splendid entertainments which Lewis the Fourteenth, in compliment to his mother and his own queen, gave under the title of *des Plaisirs l'Isle Enchantée*. These fetes, which continued seven days, and were conducted with great magnificence and taste, united all that could be got together of the true and the marvellous; in short, a kind of entremets regulated and disposed so as not to outrage the understanding. The Italian Vigarani, an ingenious

mechanist, furnished the decorations; the celebrated Lully composed the music; the President de Perigny wrote the complimentary odes; Benserade produced a variety of light and lively eulogiums; and Moliere introduced this comedy; all which, with the assistance of various appropriate devices and well-timed applications, contributed to render this fete very celebrated.

The king gave Moliere but a short time to prepare his comedy. He borrowed the fable from Augustin Moreta, and was so pressed that he could only put the first act and part of the second into verse.

*Le Marriage Forcé* was performed in 1664. This piece originally came out at the Louvre, accompanied by a ballet under the same title, in which Lewis the Fourteenth danced. The plot of this play was suggested to Moliere by a circumstance which occurred to the famous count de Grammont. That nobleman, while he resided in London, fell in love with a young lady of the name of Hamilton. Their amours even made some noise; when on a sudden he set out for France, without taking leave of the family. The brother of the young lady, who now began to look upon the affair as a little equivocal, followed the count to Dover with a determination to call him to account. He encountered him before he had an opportunity to embark, and asked, in a tone that sufficiently gave him to understand what he was at, whether he had not forgotten something at London. The count, who, perhaps, was ashamed of himself, and glad of an opportunity to atone for his conduct, answered with perfect good humor, "you are certainly in the right; I really forgot to marry your sister: but, to convince you how glad I am that you put me in mind of it, I'll return with you, and offer her my hand."

*Le Festin de Pierre* made its appearance, as written by Moliere, in 1665. This strange subject has been so often treated, and in so many languages and shapes, that it is unnecessary to say much about it. It was first brought out on the Italian stage, afterwards on the Spanish, then on the French, by at least five authors, Moliere and Corneille two of them, and at last the English, whose good sense would have revolted at witnessing a representation of it in dialogue, have contented themselves with seeing this abominable subject danced throughout the kingdom from the opera to all the puppet shows. Moliere has nevertheless thrown great strength and beauty into this horrid piece, on purpose, one should imagine, to

show that the worst subject may be treated well by a good master of his art.

*L'Amour Medicin* came out in 1665. Moliere all his life had been an enemy to the whole tribe of Galen. His motives have been variously attributed; but it is most probable that they originated from his inveterate hatred to every species of hypocrisy. He defines a physician to be a man who chatters nonsense in the bed chambers of the sick either till nature has cured or physic killed the patient. To give this piece all the effect he could, Moliere had masks which were likenesses of all the court physicians, and these he wore as he represented different medical characters.

The names also pointed out who were meant. *Desfonandres*, which signifies man-killer, was meant for De Fougereais, who always prescribed violent remedies; *Bakis*, which signifies to yelp, was designed for M. Esprit, who stuttered; *Macraton* was pointed at Guenaut, because he spoke remarkably slow; and *Tomés*, which means a bleeder, was levelled at d'Aquin, who upon all occasions ordered phlebotomy.

*Le Misanthrope*, in five acts, and in verse, was performed for the first time in 1666. This piece failed at its first representation; but Moliere withdrew it, and brought it forward again in a month, preceded by the *Fagotier*, or *Médecin Malgre*, which had such success that it was performed three months in succession, but always with the *Misanthrope*. The farce saved the comedy.

This play, however, soon made its way by its own proper merit. It has not only been considered as the best of Moliere's productions, but the best comedy ever written; but enthusiastic praise is in general an injury to authors. Moliere's enemies, who could not bear this warmth in his adherents, set themselves to work every way to lower his piece in the opinion of the public. Ridiculously enough, however, and without success. Among other endeavours to injure Moliere, an effort was made to persuade the Duc de Montausier, who was remarkable for the austerity of his manners, that in the *Misanthrope* Moliere had attempted to draw his character. The duke went immediately and saw the piece, and, as he left the theatre, was heard to say, that he should be happy, indeed, if it were true that he resembled the *Misanthrope* of Moliere.

(To be continued.)



## BIOGRAPHY.

## LIFE OF DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

[Continued from page 87.]

## CHARACTER OF MR. GARRICK.

THAT Mr. Garrick was the greatest actor of his time is so universally admitted that, if there were any one now disinclined to believe it, prudence would forbid him to avow his incredulity. Against the voice of nations, and the opinions of most of the enlightened critics of his time, it would be presumptuous, and no less vain than presumptuous, to set up a different opinion at this time; but that much of the extravagant eulogies we now read, and many of the strange stories we hear recounted of his powers, are the offspring of that warm enthusiasm which sees every thing in superlative excess, may be reasonably believed, and indeed is more likely and seems much more conformable to plain truth and common sense. We never find in real life such prodigies as those we read of; and it seems more probable that the judgment of his extreme admirers was blinded by wonder and betrayed into an exaggerated notion of his talents, than that an individual should be so much more than human as Garrick must have been, if some things recounted of him were true. It has been frequently related, and by many a person of good sense believed, that at one time, for the purpose of instructing a painter, he, merely by the force of imagination, went through the whole process of declension from ruddy health to actual death: that he first glowed with feverish heat, then grew languid—pale—helpless—sunk on a couch—his breath became hard and quick—a cadaverous ghastliness succeeded—his eyes rolled—their pupils were almost hidden, while the lids lay open, and he expired in a manner so natural as to startle the spectators. Now though it is highly probable, I would say certain, that this story was a mere fabrication, yet the fact of its being thought of, and still more its being believed, is a satisfactory demonstration that the public mind respecting this extraordinary man was wound up to a pitch of rapturous enthusiasm, such almost as Johnson, in his metaphorical language, would have called a calenture of the brain. I myself

have many times heard it repeated by men of sense and credibility, and swallowed, as if it were gospel truth, by the gaping listeners—nay, I remember the time when I should have thought him an infidel who doubted it;—but experience has cooled my credulity; and as I have since had occasion to observe that spells little less potent have been raised by talents very inferior to some of Garrick's contemporaries, of whom nothing of the kind was ever imagined, my mind is made up on the subject, and, though believing him to be the greatest actor of his day, I still think that much of what has been said of him is mere hyperbolical nonsense.

It is pretty evident that variety and comprehensiveness were the characteristics of Mr. Garrick's talents. Like our HODGKINSON, he could on the same night display great tragic and great comic powers; appal the heart with fear in Macbeth, and shake the house with laughter in Sharp. But the generally received opinion that in all the intermediate parts between these extremes he was equally great, is unwarranted by fact. A fond and amiable friend, sir Joshua Reynolds, has placed him in his celebrated picture as standing equally between tragedy and comedy; but there is more of fine poetical imagination than of truth in the worthy knight's opinion. A friend of Garrick's, of superior intellectual powers to sir Joshua, thought that Mr. Garrick's tragedy scarcely bore any comparison with his comedy:—in the former he had successful rivals, while in the latter it is probable he never had an equal in the world. A critic and poet now living, who carried his admiration of Garrick as near to enthusiasm as a fine and an accurate discriminating judgment would allow, and who was personally partial to him, maintained the superiority of Barry in many parts. Mossop, who was, at the time alluded to, a perfect stranger in London, an adventurer little known, and who laboured under the disadvantage (at that time no slight one) of being an Irishman, so successfully rivalled the English Roscius in some of his own characters, that the latter ungenerously and unjustly conspired to remove him, in order to be relieved from what he felt to be superiority.—Henderson too, wanting many natural requisites which Garrick enjoyed in perfection, though he died at an early age, held in many characters, comic as well as tragic, a very reputable rank of competition with him in the opinions of the most judicious. His affectionate friend and preceptor, Doctor Johnson, derided not only the public opinion respecting him, but laughed at his own pretensions (—"Punch cannot feel,"

said the doctor—) and gravely declared, that there was not a man in Drury-Lane theatre who could not pronounce the soliloquy of Hamlet, beginning "To be, or not to be," as well. In his comedy too, the Doctor's discerning eye perceived faults, where the public could see none; and he particularly censured him in the character of Archer, for not letting the gentleman shine through the footman. His warmest panegyrist, the Dramatic Censor, in some sort agrees with the Doctor; for he says that Mr. Garrick could never picture dignity, nor attain to what is called the fine gentleman;—but this he smooths over with the very unphilosophical reason, that it was too languid for his great powers.

In the character of Hamlet, the late Mr. Sheridan, (he whose son has eclipsed all moderns as a dramatic poet, and been surpassed by few as an orator and statesman,) held a competition with Mr. Garrick which excited his jealousy; and indeed he in some characters so far outshone him, as to render a total resignation of the characters advisable on the part of the latter; but those were chiefly declamatory characters, such as Cato, Brutus, &c.; in King John and the Roman Father he was allowed to take the lead.

Though the revolution which Mr. Garrick effected in the system of acting has brought the stage nearer to nature than it was when he first appeared, it is the opinion of many luminous critics that he injured by it the art of reading poetry. Sir Brooke Boothby says that "willing to depreciate a talent which he did not possess, Garrick contrived to bring measured and harmonious recitation into disrepute." A critic of a later day, adverting to that opinion, says, that "with all his skill, and the wonderful effects ascribed to that gentleman's acting, he was by constitution, or a natural deficiency of voice, unable to acquire reputation as a declaimer." And here again we find the opinions of his idolatrous panegyrist, the Dramatic Censor, come in confirmation of those remarks: "though generally correct in modulation," says that critic, "and almost invariably so in expressing the sense of his author, there is a respirative drag, as if to catch breath;" and further on, "Our English Roscius I never could admire in declamation; indeed he has kept pretty clear of it."\*

The innovation of Mr. Garrick, however, was certainly a happy one for the drama: but it must be understood as not at all reflecting

\* See Vol II. page 483.

upon his gigantic predecessor, Betterton. For the fact is, that elocution had, from the time of the latter, been on the decline, and when Garrick appeared had begun to assume a pompousness or unnatural sort of strut, adapted rather to the termination of the lines, than to the sense and spirit of the subject, or the joint harmony of the thoughts and numbers.\* This afforded a broad mark for a man of genius to aim at, and yielded an easy victory to such popular talents as those of Garrick,—the more easy, because his talents as a wit and a poet supplied him with weapons which he did not fail to employ, and which enabled him to accomplish his triumph over the exploded system by overcharged caricature and ludicrous imitation. Besides this, he stands accused, and that by no mean judges either, of having bounded from that which he threw into contempt to an opposite extreme, and given his principal attention to manner and gesture; for, as a respectable writer says, “in his gravest and most tragical parts he had recourse to trick, in consequence of which, those actors who merely copied him were execrable.”

Nevertheless he was certainly a wonderful actor. He had an admirable stage face, with an eye, quick, piercing, and almost miraculously expressive. He had uncommon spirit, vast discernment, and that admirable requisite, a mind formed by nature for discriminating characters, with physical organs little less powerful in exhibiting, in all their symptoms and phenomena, the lively, ardent and impetuous passions,—looks and gestures which were often more impressive and intelligible than the words of his author, and tones of voice which thrilled to the inmost recesses of the heart, and forced the stoutest nerves to vibrate in unison with them. It was by these instruments he was able to wind up the public feelings to his will, and made the world believe, contrary to fact and truth, that he was as great in tragedy as in comedy, and therefore that he was more universal than he really was.

The fame of Mr. Garrick as an actor, was not, like those of most other performers, borne up by his professional talents alone; he had other advantages, of which he made the best use possible in swelling the amount of his reputation. His wit, his humor and mi-

\* The stage in England and America is sadly degenerated again in this way, particularly among the females. This is a deformity to which the greatest industry and attention should be opposed, because it seems to be a natural tendency.



micry, his happy talent for small versification, and the great powers he possessed of rendering himself agreeable as a companion, extended his acquaintance to an immense circle. Prudence, of which he possessed a larger share than is often found united with genius, directed him to select his companions from the highest order he could reach at, and those he justly considered not only as the safest, but as the most likely to promote the interest of any man they admit to their intimacy, and at the same time the least wasteful to the purse. From among the opulent, the learned, and the powerful, he chose his associates, and those he cultivated with all the address of which he was master, carrying on a large traffic of flattery, of which he was no niggard either to them or to himself;—as Goldsmith says, he was “*be-Roscious’d* and they were *be-praised*.” He puffed them up with adulation, dexterously administered to each, through the medium of the others. They pledged themselves that he was the most extraordinary man in the world, and thought themselves bound to redeem their pledge; and thus was he so effectually insured against all competition, that an actor of equal talents would have had no chance of success in a struggle with him.

That he really believed himself to be so very superior as his panegyrists described, and his admirers thought him,—and his panegyrists and admirers were almost a whole nation,—may well be doubted, as envy of the most painful kind, and jealousy amounting to panic, continually harassed him. He never failed to betray emotions of discontent whenever the conversation turned upon the merits of great performers; and this unhappy feeling so tyrannically overruled reason, candour and liberality in his heart, that he became jealous of those who could not be his rivals, and actually sickened at the praises of eminent actresses. Mrs. Pritchard’s fame greatly embittered his life. Doctor Beattie, speaking of Mrs. Siddons in a letter to Sir William Forbes, says, “I asked Tom Davies, (the author of Garrick’s life) whether he could account for Garrick’s neglect, or rather discouragement of her. He imputed it to jealousy. How is it possible, said I, that Garrick could be jealous of a woman? He would have been jealous of a child, answered he, if that child had been a favorite of the public: to my certain knowledge he would.”\* Yet the Doctor was a great ad-

\* See Dr. Beattie’s life, New-York edition, page 372.

mirer of Garrick, as appears from several passages in his letters; he says that that great actor had once, in playing Macbeth, nearly made him throw himself over the front of the two shilling gallery. And in another letter he says, "I thought my old friend Garrick "fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection; and I have "seen him in his prime and in his highest characters; but Garrick "never affected me half so much as Mrs. Siddons has done." Had Garrick lived to hear this from such a person as Doctor Beattie, it would have killed him;—but the Doctor had in him as large a share of prudent suavity as Mr. Garrick himself, and would not probably have hurt the feelings of Roscius by the avowal of such an opinion, if he were alive.

From Garrick's excessive and irrational jealousy arose a number of foibles, and, I am sorry to say it, one vice worse than all. It rendered him sometimes unjust to the merit of others, and sometimes betrayed him into little acts of duplicity. His conduct to Mr. Mossop is one of the many instances which appear in the history of the stage to establish this charge against him. Tate Wilkinson, who has indulged as freely as any one in jesting upon the singularities of that excellent actor, Mossop, speaking of his leaving Drury Lane, says, "It was occasioned by an affront he took from Mr. "Garrick's appointing him to act Richard, as we will suppose this "night, and his first and best character,\* which *stood well against* "Mr. Garrick's, though not so artfully discriminated; while at the "same time the manager (Garrick) had secured a command from "the Prince of Wales, for the night following; so that when Mossop had finished his Richard with remarkable credit, to his astonishment the Mr. Palmer of that age stepped forward, and said, "To-morrow night, by command of his royal highness the Prince "of Wales (George the third, then a youth), King Richard the "third,—King Richard by Mr. Garrick."—It gave a great damp "to what Mr. Mossop had just done. It was certainly galling, and "proved duplicity and ill-nature as well as envy." Nothing that can be advanced on this transaction could convey a more adequate idea of Mr. Garrick's motives, than the simple recital of the transaction itself. It was decisive as to the fate of Mossop, who was too proud to remain any longer at Drury Lane, and too dignified to complain of the insult to any one but Mr. Garrick himself.

\* No; not by many, not by a great deal!

In disgust, therefore, he left him for ever, and engaging with Barry and Woodward, at Crow-street, Dublin, incurred that series of losses and woes which at last brought him to the grave.

Though Mr. Sheridan was a much less formidable rival than Mossop, Mr. Garrick was tortured with jealousy of him too: and his feelings were raised to an unreasonable degree of painfulness at Sheridan's success in King John, especially when he was told that the king was uncommonly pleased with that actor's representation of the part. "To make the draught still more unpalatable," says the recorder of these facts, "upon his (Garrick's) asking whether his majesty approved his playing the Bastard, he was told, without the least compliment paid to his acting, it was imagined that the king thought that the character was rather too bold in the drawing, and that the colouring was *overcharged and glaring*. "Mr. Garrick, who had been so accustomed to applause, and who, of all men living, most sensibly felt the neglect of it, was greatly struck with a preference given to another, and which left him out of all consideration; and though the boxes were taken for King John several nights successively, he would never after permit the play to be acted."

These are proofs of a most unpardonable invidiousness of nature: They are absolute,—not in the least doubtful, or capable of palliation,—for of Mossop or Sheridan he was not called upon to give an opinion: the stamp of public opinion had been long impressed upon them. But in the case of Henderson, a pretext may be set up that his opposition to that admirable actor was an error of judgment. Yet his many endeavours to depreciate, and his perseverance in undervaluing Henderson, after the talents of the latter had gone through the mint, assayed to high value, show that our hero was governed, in that case at least, by the same envious spirit which moved him in those of Sheridan and Mossop. After Henderson had at Bath obtained the name of the Bath Roscius, and at Dublin was placed in the same rank with their favored Mossops, Sheridans, and Barrys,—and what was much more, after he had received the most unequivocal approbation from no less a man than Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Mr. Garrick being prevailed upon to go to the Haymarket to see him play Shylock, in which he excelled, and being asked by the friend who brought him, "Well, Mr. Garrick,—speak candidly!—did not Shylock please you?" "Oh yes, oh yes," replied Garrick,—*"and so did Tubal."*

Without meaning any thing like offence to the profession, we are firmly persuaded that there are many good actors who are far from being competent judges of the merits of others. We have been accustomed from infancy to hear it remarked, and long observation has confirmed us in the opinion. We think it not difficult to account for it either. Old Charles Macklin, who never saw real merit that he did not endeavour to bring it forward, of which there are many living examples, and the venerable Mr. Hull, of Covent-garden theatre, were excellent judges, and no doubt others are to be found; but we speak generally. Even old Sheridan, who, so far from having any of Garrick's envy, always erred on the other side, and who was a gentleman of most uncommon powers of mind and refined taste, was deficient in judgment upon the talents of players; of which we cannot give a stronger proof than what Doctor Beattie relates of him. In a letter to Sir William Forbes, the Doctor says, that "Sheridan assured him, that in every comic character, from Lady Townly to Nell, Mrs. Siddons was as great and as original as in tragedy;" which was downright rhodomontade. In reviewing the history of the stage, we find Mr. Garrick, with a perversion of judgment truly astonishing, the opposer of candidates of talent, and the promoter of men of incapacity. He discouraged the after celebrated Tom King, and kept him in the shade, till Mr. Sheridan took him to Dublin, where he first received the just reward of his rare powers. He refused Miss Brent, though urged by Doctor Arne to secure her to his theatre; and he entirely overlooked Miss Younge for two seasons, during which she played inferior parts under him at Drury Lane Theatre. That this was owing to mere defect of judgment, not jealousy, appears from his subsequent conduct; for as soon as he heard that she succeeded in Dublin, he actually despatched Moody the player after her, to offer her a *carte blanche*; in consequence of which she played the first characters at Drury Lane for eight years, and would have continued to do so longer, if Mr. Harris had not bought her off by terms which Mr. Garrick would not agree to. To the repeated offers of the celebrated John Palmer, and after various probationary rehearsals, he gave a positive refusal, still assuring him that "he never would do;"—and he uniformly undervalued the imperial mistress of the stage, Mrs. Siddons; while on the other hand he admired more than any one, Tate Wilkinson, one of the worst actors in the world;—and why?—why truly, because he was a mimic. These are all facts, to find which



we can direct any reader to the books and pages where they are recorded: and we think it is not going too far to conclude from these instances of his want of judgment or of candour in the case of persons of conspicuity, that numbers who might have been ornaments to the stage, were pushed off from it in the course of his long theatrical reign, and were left to languish away life unknown, perhaps, in obscurity and want.

Lively as was his genius, and irritable as were his feelings, his conduct was still kept under the steady unrelaxed rein of worldly prudence and discretion. Like most other actors, he frequently mistook the bent of his talents, and often found that his inclinations and his professional powers were at variance: very different from them, however, he never persisted in putting his conceits into practice; but as soon as he found that the public differed from his expectation in his performance of a character, he wisely abandoned the attempt. Falstaff, Shylock, the Bastard in King John, King John himself, Marplot, and a long et cætera, he attempted because he liked them, and left them because the public did not: for it is a mistaken idea, universally though it prevailed, that he could play every thing better than all other actors. His superiority consisted really in this, that he was unrivalled in a greater number and greater variety of characters than any other performer.

To say that in wit he was inferior to Foote, is to say no more of him than may be asserted of any of the most brilliant of their contemporaries. That Garrick had occasionally sallies of true wit is unquestionable; but they were only occasional, not frequent; nor were they, as Foote's were, continually and instantly at his command. I have often heard the question discussed, whether Garrick's claim to the title of a wit was perfectly clear. He had, however, in abundance, that which often passes current for wit, a vigorous and lively imagination, aided by a considerable share of knowledge of books, and much knowledge of mankind, together with a keen perception of the ludicrous. Along with these he had extraordinary talents for mimicry, and an excellent memory, which, from a large store of experience and observation, furnished him with boundless materials for conversation, of which he generally made the most, expatiating upon them in a very fascinating manner: but from his dilatations, if they were presented in writing and not witnessed personally, any man who knew him could tell what the sort of company was in which he uttered them. In the presence of superiors in

rank and condition, his fancy seemed to be lowered down to a reverential decorum: and in the presence of Foote his wit was subdued as it is said Antony's spirit was by Cæsar. It was not in the pleasant warfare of wit, nor in the quick reply or retort, nor in the vivid reciprocation of dialogue he shone, but in the happy relation of humorous stories, and pleasant anecdotes. In these he had a peculiar felicity, and was almost unrivalled. The superiority of Barry in the telling of an Irish story, however, but in none other, he acknowledged. Yet with all these gifts there is reason to believe that Goldsmith's character of him in the little poem of Retaliation, was perfectly correct. With his opinion,

"It is only that when he is *off* he is acting,"

Lord Orford (Walpole) exactly corresponded. "I dined to day at Garrick's, (says his lordship)—There were the duke of Grafton, lady Rochfort, lady Holderness, the crooked Moyston, and Da-breu, the Spanish minister; two regents, of which one is lord chamberlain, and the other groom of the stole; and the wife of a secretary of state. This is being sur un assez bon ton, for a player! Don't you want to ask me how I like him?—Do want, and I will tell you. I like her exceedingly; she is all sense and all sweetness too. I don't know how, he does not improve so fast upon me! There is a great deal of parts, vivacity, and variety; but there is a great deal too of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly; but unluckily I know it. I was accustomed to it enough, when my father was first minister; on his fall I lost it all at once."—"Garrick," says another elegant writer, "was all submission in the presence of a peer or a poet; equally loth to offend the dignity of the one, or provoke the irritability of the other: hence he was at all times too methodical in his conversation, to admit of his mixing in the feast of reason and the flow of soul. To his dependents and inferior players, however, he was indeed *King David*, except when he had a mind to mortify them by means of one another. On such occasions, he generally took up some of the lowest among them, whom he not only cast in the same scenes with himself, but frequently walked arm and arm with them in the green-room, and sometimes in his morning rambles about the streets."

By all his imitators, his ordinary deportment and speech in private life have been described as very singular. We have heard him

mimicked by Henderson, whose imitation was said to be frightfully perfect,—by Brush Collins,—by Tate Wilkinson,—by a celebrated public mimic in London, whose name we now forget. Their imitations all partook no doubt of the exaggeration inseparable from mimicry; but they all so exactly resembled each other, that it was impossible to resist the persuasion that they were all good caricature pictures of the same person. Henderson's was comparatively chaste, and was said by some of Garrick's intimates to be very little overcharged. Taking this for granted, I conceive Wilkinson's account of Garrick's conversation to come as near to the thing as it is possible for writing to bring it. Of this, a single specimen will answer as well as a thousand. It seems that owing to the departure of Mossop, Garrick was at a loss for a Bajazet, and perhaps to mortify Mossop, he selected Wilkinson to perform that great character. A private rehearsal of the part was ordered in Mr. Garrick's dressing-room, and in his presence, for the benefit of his corrections. Mr. Cross, the prompter, was ordered to attend with the play, and also Mr. Holland, who was to perform Tamerlane. Mr. Garrick was in high humour, and Wilkinson, who says so, details the conversation thus: "*Well now, Cross, hey! Why now, this will be too much for my exotic! Hey, Cross, I must do it myself; what say you? Hey now, Cross!*" Cross replied, "I am afraid not this year, sir, as the time is drawing near, and Bajazet is long, and the play must be done next Monday."—"Well now, hey Cross! why that is true; but don't you think my brow and eye in Bajazet! How do you think I should play it?" "Oh, sir," said Cross, "like every thing else you do,—your Bajazet would be incomparable!" "to which we all bowed and assented." He then acted a speech or two in the first scene, and his look was truly inimitable."

From the life of Mr. Garrick some most useful lessons of prudence and moral conduct may be deduced. One of those, and perhaps the most valuable, because it concerns our duty towards our neighbour, is to be cautious how we form opinions upon the characters of our fellow creatures on the illusory grounds of public report: for it is not more impossible for a thing to be at once black and white, light and dark, good and bad, than for David Garrick to be such as he has been described. It may serve too to check any overweening fondness for public opinion, inspired by pride and vanity, to see how inefficacious to the obtaining of unsullied reputation, or even fair play, are the most strenuous efforts of the finest

talents. To us it seems impossible to find two men more different than the Garrick of his admirers and the Garrick of his adversaries.

As specimens of the pro and con on this subject, the reader will peruse, no doubt with surprise, the following characters. The first is taken from the *European Magazine*.

"He was too cunning and too selfish to be loved or respected, and so immoderately fond of money and praise that he expected you should cram him with flattery. He was a kind of spoiled child, whom you must humour in all his ways and follies. He was often in extremes of civility and sly impertinence, provoking and timid by turns. If he handed you a teacup or a glass, you must take it as a great condescension; and he often called to you in the street, to tell you, in a loud voice, and at some distance, that he intended you the honour of a visit. This, some wag termed a visit in perspective. He was sore and waspish to a degree of folly, and had creatures about him who were stationed spies, and gave him intelligence of every idle word that was said of him; at the same time they misrepresented or exaggerated what passed, in order to gratify him. He was very entertaining, and could tell a story with great humour; but he was generally posting to his interest, and so taken up with his own concerns, that he seldom was a pleasant companion. He was stiff and strained, and more an actor in company than on the stage, as Goldsmith has described him. In short, he was an unhappy man with all his success and fame, and wore himself out in fretting and solicitude about his worldly affairs, and in theatrical squabbles and altercation. Though he loved money, he has been friendly on some occasions, and liberal to persons in distress: but he had the knack of making his acquaintance useful and subservient to him, and always had his interest in view. His levees put you in mind of a court, where you might see mean adulation, insincerity, pride, and vanity, and the little man in ecstasy at hearing himself applauded by a set of toad-eaters, and hungry poets.

"As an author he was not without merit, having written some smart epigrams, prologues, epilogues and farces; and to do him justice, he was not very vain of his writings.

"To conclude of him as an actor,

"Take him for all in all,

"I ne'er shall see his like again."



“As a man he had failings, for which we must make allowance, when we consider that he was intoxicated and even corrupted by the great incense and court paid to him by his admirers.”

The next is taken from a character which old Macklin, at his death, left behind him in his papers. We will not introduce the whole of it here, as it would unnecessarily swell this article; besides, Macklin having been long an enemy to Garrick, and, (if we may believe Davies, Garrick's panegyrist) not without just cause, we should not like to give currency to some of the charges it contains against the moral character of Roscius. The strictures on his acting we believe to be overcharged, though not entirely destitute of foundation; for as often as we have seen Mr. Garrick imitated, we never saw the *pawing*, the *hawling*, the *squeezing of the hat*, and the thumping of the breast left out. His fairest mimic, Henderson, did them all for Garrick, and sometimes, in comedy, pawed and hawled a little for himself.

“His eye,” says Macklin, “was dark, but not characteristical of any passion but the fierce and the lively. His art in acting consisted in incessantly *pawing and hawling* the characters about, with whom he was concerned in the scene; and when he did not paw or hawl the character, he stalked between them and the audience; and that generally when they were speaking the most important and interesting passage in the scene, which demanded in propriety a strict attention. When he spoke himself, he pulled about the character he spoke to, and squeezed his hat, hung forward, and stood almost upon one foot, with no part of the other to the ground than the toe of it.

“His whole action when he made love, in tragedy or in comedy,—when he was familiar with his friend,—when he was in anger, sorrow, rage,—consisted in squeezing his hat, thumping his breast, strutting up and down the stage, and pawing the characters he acted with.

“In private life, had this man been interdicted the use of mimicry, of simulation, and dissimulation, he would have appeared, what in reality he was, a superficial, insignificant man. But with the help of those arts he was entertaining, and appeared sagacious, learned, and good-natured, modest and friendly to those who had no dealings with him,—but to those who had, he was known to the very heart; for his attachment to interest in deal-

ings, made him as obvious as if nature had made a window to his heart.

“ A stronger instance of its influence sure never was known, than in the person we have now under consideration; for, not satisfied with endeavouring to destroy the fame of every contemporary actor, he attacked even that of the actresses, and succeeded. Nor was the traducement of the living fame of male and female, of every age and rank upon the stage, sufficient to gorge the maw of envy: it flew to the dead! and insidiously broke open the tombs of Betterton, Booth, Wilks, and other honoured spirits, Nature’s favourite children, who had been fostered and perfected by art, applause, and time,—and when living, whom envy’s self allowed to be nature’s darling sons, and art’s perfect pupils: yet these very spirits would he silyly bring upon the carpet; mimic, though he never saw them; tell anecdotes of them, and traduce their immortal fame, by stigmatizing them as mannerists, and denominating them as persons who spoke in recitative. Thus would he serve them up to ignorant people, who believed and wondered; and to dependents and flatterers, who retailed the libellous anecdotes, invectives and quaint conceits, and concluded that the art was never known but by the narrator, who, with an apparent modesty, and a concealed impudence, made himself the hero of the historical criticism.

“ His mind was busied upon the external and partial looks, tones, gaits, and motions of individuals in their ordinary habits. Of the passions, their degrees and kinds, and of their influence upon the organs, and their impressions upon the body, he knew but little, very little indeed! His mind and knowledge were, like his body, little, pert, acute, quick, weak, easily shocked and worn down, subtle, plausible.

“ By this external partial imitation of individuals, he continually exercised his mind and body. This wretched buffoonery comprised his knowledge, his humour, his learning, conversation, wisdom, virtue, elegance, breeding, and his companionable qualities. His mimicry, both off the stage and on it, served him instead of figure, grace, character, manners, and of a perfect imitation of general nature as it passes through human life, in every character, age, rank, and station.”

And now for one of his eulogists:

“ David Garrick was in figure low, pleasing, manly,\* genteel, and elegant. He had every requisite to fit him for every character. His limbs were pliant, his features ductile and expressive, and his eyes keen, quick, and obedient, versant to all occasions and places. His voice was harmonious, and could vibrate through all the modulations of sound; could thunder in passion—tremble in fear—dissolve into the softness of love, or swell into every mood of pity or distress. These liberal devices of nature were ornamented by the most refined acquisitions of art—music, dancing, painting, fencing, sculpture—gave him each its respective graces. From these he borrowed his deportment, his attitudes, and his ease.

“ These were the powers with which he charmed an astonished age, and with these powers he had all nature at his command.—Every degree of age—every stage, scene, and period of life, from the hot and youthful lover, up to the lean and slippered pantaloon—all were alike to him. At twenty-four he could put on the wrinkles of the greatest age—and at sixty he wore in his appearance and action all the agility of buxom and wanton youth. In heroes and princes he assumed all the distant pride, the exalted manner and stately port of rank and royalty. He moved with dignity, and acted with dignity. His prince never interposed with his peasant, nor his peasant with his gentleman. He had in his possession every key to the soul. He transported his hearers where he pleased. He was the master of the passions, and turned them to his will: he waked them, swelled them, soothed them; he melted them into softness, or roused them into rage.—If he was angry, so was you;—if he was terrified, so was you;—if he was merry, so was you;—if he was mad, so was you. He was an enchanter, and led you where he pleased.”

While the former character (given by Macklin) is certainly deficient in candor, though not destitute of truth, and, even in the statement of facts, bears evident marks of rancour, the latter is no less evidently inflamed by misjudging, indiscriminate admiration, and may truly be called panegyric run mad—or at least swelled to monstrous hyperbole. We rather imagine that the reader who believes only half of each will be nearer the true mark than either of

\* This is a mistake: for it is admitted that he was in many respects, particularly about the hips, formed like a plump woman.

them; for Garrick's most rational eulogists admit that he could not picture the *dignified* prince, the fine gentleman, or the hero. Still he was indubitably the greatest general actor of his age. That he had recourse to every expedient of art which could render his acting attractive, is not to be doubted: his giant panegyrist Churchill enumerates it amongst his perfections.

"If manly sense,—*if nature link'd with art,*—

"If thorough knowledge of the human heart," &c. &c.

But then it was art so exquisitely managed as to lose the appearance of art. In another man those expedients would have been called stage trick;—but Garrick shaded down their lineaments so gracefully into those of nature, that the distinctive lines became imperceptible. Sometimes he went lengths that outraged sense; but then he bore along with him such a blaze of beauty, that the general eye was too much dazzled to perceive the defect. Such was his using a sledge instead of a crow in the church-yard scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, in order to set off his person in high attitude, and show the appearance of Herculean strength. In a literary war waged against him by Theophilus Cibber, he was charged with this childish folly, and the charge was never controverted. The sledge, it seems, was composed, not of iron, but of very light wood, and was as large in bulk as an ordinary anvil, almost as his own body; and with this armed, the little giant stood in the act of beating down the gates of Capulet's monument,—so exquisitely happy and picturesque, however, was he in attitude, that the absurdity was overlooked, till his *d—d good friend* The: Cibber opened the eyes of the public, and indeed of Garrick himself to it.

Mr. Garrick's attention to his pecuniary concerns no doubt furnished the wits with a subject for raillery, and malicious calumniators with topics for libel and detraction. But the wit and the libels are buried in the monument of the Capulets, while the beneficence of their object remains recorded, and will be a monument to his honour much superior to his histrionic fame. That he was frugal, and perhaps in the eyes of prodigals and vitious spendthrifts, penurious, is undeniable: but let it be remembered that it was that very frugality which enabled him to do acts of generosity and charity that would confer credit on the munificence of a prince. Doctor Johnson has left us his testimony upon that subject, which of itself would put the matter beyond controversy; but there are many other



proofs extant. And all the sneers of Foote and Macklin, and all the witty bonmots of Peg Woffington, and vulgar raillery of Mrs. Clive, are of little—little did I say?—no weight at all against the recorded benefactions of Mr. Garrick to the fund for the support of decayed actors. This is a praise beyond all the fugitive applause he ever received in thirty years from idolizing multitudes. The latter are to him as if they had never been,—left behind him,—while the latter accompany him into a world of immortality. We will not swell this article with a minute recapitulation of facts which are well known, and in which all his foibles are lost, as the sparks of a flint-stone in the noonday blaze of the sun. If he was irritable he was also forgiving, and liberally helped Smollet who shamefully abused him, and relieved the wants of Paul Hiffernan the poet, who deserved very different treatment at his hands.

But of all the accounts we have received of the charitable disposition of Mr. Garrick, that which comes home most to the heart, is one communicated to the Monthly Mirror of London, by Mr. Smith, late of Drury-lane theatre, who justly enjoys as large a share of the respect and attachment of the first people in that kingdom, as any man in any situation of life whatever. Wishing to leave our readers with that impression of Mr. Garrick which his virtues warrant, we will conclude this article with the words of Mr. Smith.

“ There has long existed a mistaken prejudice with respect to  
 “ the character of that great and good man, Mr. Garrick, whom I  
 “ respected, honoured, and loved, almost to idolatry, which I should  
 “ be happy to remove. He has been often charged with want of  
 “ generosity and benevolence: but I believe the direct contrary to  
 “ be the fact. I had very frequent opportunities, from the intimacy  
 “ and friendship with which he honoured me, of applying to him  
 “ in behalf of objects in distress. I found his hand and heart ever  
 “ open on these occasions, and have received *very considerable*  
 “ sums from him to dispose of as I thought fit. I could produce  
 “ several instances of his liberality, but, as the parties are not pub-  
 “ licly known, I shall, at present, mention only two.

“ The celebrated poet, commonly called Kit Smart, formerly  
 “ fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, was frequently in embar-  
 “ rassed circumstances, and sometimes in confinement: Garrick  
 “ often sent me to him, in these cases, with an unlimited power to  
 “ make him as comfortable as his station would allow; and consi-

“derable sums have I paid for, and given to Mr. Smart, on his account, under a strict charge of secrecy; but as both parties are now no more, there can be no occasion to conceal a transaction which reflects so much honour on Mr. Garrick’s private character.

“The second is the case of a Mr. Hinds, whom I saw in a wretched strolling company, near my residence in Suffolk. He came to me to solicit my influence to fill a house, of which the company was in great want. His appearance interested me in his favour: I perceived the latent gentleman, and, in conversation, found him a man of education. I hinted, as far as propriety would justify, a wish to know more of him;—he told me that he was of a good family in Ireland: that he had spent, and lost at play, near thirty thousand pounds: had recourse to the stage as his *dernier* resort: failed in the attempt: was totally discarded by his family, and reduced to his present state:—adding, that if he could raise about thirty or forty pounds, he could purchase a situation in the country, and become master of an itinerant company of players, that would probably make him easy for life. On my return to the stage, in the winter, I learned from old Mr. Sparks, and Mr. Dyer, who had known Hinds in Ireland, that his tale was truth. We accordingly made a collection for him in the green-room, and on my application to Mr. Garrick, he bade me make up for *him* the deficiency of the sum wanted. I said, smilingly, “A few guineas over would not be amiss:” “Give him then the *whole* for me,” replied the generous man, “and let your collection be the overplus.”

“This, sir, is a long story, but I hope it will convince those who read it, of what I wish was perfectly understood, THE BENEVOLENCE OF GARRICK.”

## SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF Mrs. SIDDONS.

IN our last number we gave a portrait of that celebrated actress, Mrs. Siddons, done from a picture painted some twenty years ago. In this number we give our subscribers a companion to it. Both are as great likenesses of those two respectable personages as any extant. The biography, which might naturally have been expected to accompany the former portrait is now given accompanied by the latter; it appearing to us desirable that of the biographies of two great persons so closely allied by blood, so united by affection, and so relative to each other in professional history, should go into the world together. The first we offer is a sketch of the life of Mrs. Siddons.

This accomplished woman, and theatrical phenomenon, is the eldest daughter of the late Roger Kemble, who, at her birth, was manager of an itinerant company of players. Very early in life she trod her father's stage as a singer, but soon quitted that line for tragedy. In the bloom of youth she conceived and indulged a passion for Mr. Siddons, which not being countenanced by her parents, she quitted the stage, and engaged herself as lady's maid in the family of Mrs. Greathead, of Guy's-cliff, near Warwick, where she remained about a year; and then resolving to unite herself to the man of her affections, she was married to Mr. Siddons, and soon after joined a strolling company of no great reputation.

In the course of a short time, she and her husband had the good fortune to be engaged by Mr. Younger to perform at Liverpool, Birmingham, &c. with whom she continued a few years, and acquired both profit and reputation; and, in consequence of her increasing celebrity, she was engaged at Drury-lane, where she performed such characters as Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Epicene, and the Queen in Richard the Third. Mrs. Siddons was at this time only considered as a second-rate actress; and being unfortunately assigned a part in an after-piece, written by the editor of a newspaper, which was damned the first night, the ungenerous author left no opportunity of injuring her reputation, and she quitted the London boards for a time, to return to them afterwards with increased lustre.

Our heroine immediately repaired to Bath, where she was observed to improve rapidly, and is said to have been usefully assisted by the lessons of Mr. Pratt, then a bookseller in that city,

There she attracted the notice of the audience, and had the good fortune to be patronized by the dutchess of Devonshire, who procured her another engagement at Drury-lane. Before she left Bath she wrote and spoke a farewell address, which she delivered with her usual excellence. She made her second appearance at Drury-lane on the 10th of October, 1782, in the character of Isabella, and astonished the house with such a display of powers as they had seldom witnessed. Her fame was soon spread abroad, and the theatre overflowed every night; the taste for tragedy returned; and the manager, whose Critic seems to have been expressly written to drive Melpomene from the stage, received "golden favours" from her votaries. Far from proving ungrateful, he generously gave Mrs. Siddons an extra benefit, and increased her salary. Her success was the means of introducing her sister, Miss F. Kemble, on the same stage; and she performed Jane Shore, while her near relative played Alicia, on her first appearance. The latter, however, not altogether fulfilling the expectations of the public, honourably withdrew, in consequence of a marriage with Mr. Twiss, a literary gentleman, and a well known traveller.

Mrs. Siddons's *extra* benefit was given her before christmas; she then appeared in Belvidera, and gained fresh laurels, and an enormous receipt. The two counsellors, Pigot and Fielding, were so highly delighted, that they collected a subscription among the gentlemen of the bar, of one hundred guineas, and presented them to her, accompanied with a polite letter, as a token of their esteem. This was an honour which we believe has not been conferred on any actor or actress since the time when Booth gave such general satisfaction in the character of Cato.

In the summer, this great and amiable actress went to Dublin, the inhabitants of which were equally astonished at her powers. On her return for the winter (1783-4), she performed, for the first time, "by command of their majesties." During the succeeding summer, she took a second trip to Ireland, and also visited Edinburgh; in both of which places she not only received great salaries, but very considerable presents from unknown hands, particularly a silver urn, which was sent after her to London, on which was engraved these words—"A reward to Merit."

Envy and malice, as usual, pursued merit; and to these alone we can attribute the attack made on her in a newspaper, respecting her treatment of an unhappy sister, &c.—These reports had, how-



ever, such an effect on the town, that on her first appearance on the stage in 1784, she was saluted with the cry of "*off! off!*" Her friends at length obtained her a hearing; and her husband and brother, by means of uncommon exertions, succeeded in refuting the calumnies to which she had been exposed. She was accordingly restored to public favour. Although she had conducted herself during this contest with great composure, yet it made such an impression on her mind, that she determined to retire to Wales with the few thousands she had then saved: but the persuasions of her friends, and a consideration of the welfare of her family, made her alter this resolution.

Their majesties about this time paid her much attention. Her talent in reciting dramatic works had been highly spoken of, which reaching the ears of the royal family, she was frequently invited to Buckingham-house and Windsor, where she and her brother often recited plays.

As some relaxation on account of her health had now become necessary, she quitted Drury-lane for a time, and performed at Weymouth, Plymouth, Liverpool, &c. under the most honourable and flattering patronage, which, with her increasing reputation, rendered her journey very profitable.

On her return to town, she entered into a new engagement with the proprietors of Drury-lane, who paid her a certain sum for each night's performance, by which means she avoided injuring her health by the constant repetition of theatrical exertions.

Since her brother, Mr. John Kemble, became a proprietor of Covent-garden theatre, her services have been given to the interest of that property; and considering the declining state of the tragic muse, Mrs. Siddons has displayed her wonderful talents with great pecuniary advantage to the theatre.

This lady, who adorns the mimic hemisphere with such distinguished splendor, is now near sixty years of age; and though she has laboured under several severe fits of indisposition, she still retains every vigor of intellect and person, with all that majestic beauty which is the peculiar character of her countenance. Like her brother, she inherits a dignified person, with a cast of features happily formed to delineate all the great passions of the soul.

(To be continued.)

## MISCELLANY.

FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

SHEE'S RHYMES ON ART; OR, THE REMONSTRANCE OF A  
PAINTER.

At a time, when the presses of England and America are teeming with the nonsensical follies of superficial egotists,—when the productions of genius, and the sallies of vigorous imagination, are discarded for contemptible puerilities,—it will not be improper to solicit the attention of the citizens of Philadelphia, to the above named poem, written by Samuel Archer Shee, esquire; in which will be found some of the most animated poetry and pungent satire of modern times. I am astonished that no edition of this truly valuable work, has yet been published in our city. The booksellers certainly cannot be ignorant of its various merits; and I am fully convinced, that, could they be prevailed upon to publish it, the demand would sufficiently recompense their trouble. The excellence of the versification, the justness and asperity of the satire, would undoubtedly be admired by every man of genius and taste. I do not pretend to say, that my judgment is infallible, or that my taste is uncommonly refined: but the exalted encomiums I have heard lavished upon the work, by men who are generally considered capable of deciding upon the merits of authors, (added to my thorough conviction of the unrivalled excellence of the poem) induces me to hazard the foregoing bold assertion. Whilst the *Vision of Don Roderick* (the *feeblest* production of Scott) has excited the greatest curiosity in the polite circles of Philadelphia, the “*Remonstrance of a Painter*,” a work of transcendent merit, is suffered to lie neglected or forgotten,—so partial are the “*distributers of literary honours*,” and so uncertain are the rewards of genius! But I cannot resort to a more powerful means of awaking public attention, than by observing that Mr. Shee has received the most distinguished honours from the London reviewers, as well as an elegant panegyric from the editor of the *Port Folio*,—a man who unites the acquirements of the scholar, to the candour and sincerity of the *real* gentleman. The notes to this little volume are copious and elegant; the style of the author is said to resemble that of Burke, by men

well qualified to decide a question of that nature: it doubtless possesses many of the beauties of that celebrated orator, and approximates more nearly to the general excellence of his style, than any other. The figures of Mr. Shee are often new, and polished with every elegance of diction. His observations are the "ebullitions of a mind" intimately acquainted with the subject under discussion, in all its relations and tendencies. Of Shee it has been said, with much justice, that he is the first poet, painter, and critic, of this age: to these splendid appellations we may add, with equal propriety, that of the most correct and eloquent prose writer. These "contrarieties of excellence," united in the same person, are surely enough to rouse the public from the "frigid indifference" towards works of merit, into which they have been lulled by the cobweb productions of modern novelists. To conclude: the intrinsic excellencies of this poem are such, as must shortly procure it that unlimited applause to which it appears to be so justly intitled. The medium through which this hasty communication reaches the public, is so respectable, that I flatter myself it may be productive of some beneficial effects. To be in the least degree instrumental in promoting the pleasure and improvement of the society of which we happen to be members, is a source of satisfaction, to which the memory ever recurs with peculiar delight.

LEON.

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#### THE CHARACTER OF OUR SAVIOUR.

BY MR. BELSHAM.

THE character of Jesus is perfectly original. It is unlike every thing which had ever appeared in the world. There had indeed been eminent persons who had assumed the office of instructors of mankind in religion and virtue. But Jesus differed widely from them all in the nature of his doctrine, in his mode of instruction, in his habits of life and manner of conversation, in the character which he assumed, in the dignity of his conduct, in the authority of his language, in the proofs which he exhibited of a divine commission, and in the manner in which he left those proofs to make their proper impression upon the mind without himself drawing the genuine conclusions.

He claimed to be the Messiah, the distinguished personage foretold by the prophets, and expected by the Jews. But the form was totally different from that in which he was expected to appear;

from that which an impostor would have worn, which all impostors did actually put on, and which the writer of a fictitious narrative would naturally have represented. He was expected to appear in all the splendor of a prince and a conqueror. He actually appeared under the form of a pauper and a servant.

The character which he thus assumed, so entirely new, so utterly unexpected, and in many respects so very offensive to his countrymen, he sustained with the most becoming propriety. The circumstances in which he was placed were numerous, various, and dissimilar to each other: some of them were very critical and difficult; nevertheless, upon all occasions he maintains the character of a prophet of God, of a teacher of truth and righteousness, with the most perfect consistency and dignity: in no instance does he forget his situation: upon no occasion, in no emergency, however sudden or unexpected, under no provocation, however irritating, is he surprised or betrayed to do any thing unworthy of himself, or unbecoming the sublime and sacred mission with which he was charged.

To support the consistency of a fictitious character through a considerable work, even though the character is drawn from common life, is a mark of no ordinary capacity and judgment. But to adhere from beginning to end to truth of delineation in a character perfectly original, in circumstances various and new, and especially where supernatural agency is introduced, is characteristic of genius of the highest order. Attempts to represent a perfect character have failed in the hands of the greatest masters. Defects are visible in the portraits of the philosopher and the hero, notwithstanding the masterly pencilling and exquisite colouring of Plato and Xenophon. But the obscure and illiterate evangelists have succeeded to perfection. Not one writer only, but four. Not in describing different characters, in which they would not have been liable to have interfered with each other, but in the representation of the same unblemished and extraordinary character; to which each has contributed something which the rest have omitted, and yet all are perfectly consistent and harmonious. The unity of character is invariably preserved.

Admit that this character actually existed, allow that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, and that the historians describe nothing but what they saw and heard, and to which they were daily witnesses, and the wonder ceases; all is natural and easy; the nar-



rators were honest and competent witnesses; and Jesus was a true prophet of the Most High. Deny these facts, and the history of the evangelists instantly swells into a prodigy of genius,—a sublime fiction of the imagination, which surpasses all the most celebrated productions of human wit. The illiterate Galileans eclipse all the renowned historians, philosophers and poets of Greece and Rome. But who will affirm, or who could believe this, of these simple, artless, unaffected writers? It is incredible, it is impossible, that these plain and unlettered men should have invented so extraordinary, so highly finished a romance. Their narrative therefore must be true. The prophet of Nazareth is a real person, and his divine legation is undeniable. I know not how this argument may appear to others; but to me it carries the force of almost mathematical demonstration. I cannot conceive a proof which can be more satisfactory to a candid, an intelligent, and a well informed mind.

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## DISPROPORTIONED MARRIAGES.

ILL suited matches are productive of such complicated misery, that it is a wonder it should be necessary to declaim against them, and by arguments and examples expose the folly, or brand the cruelty of such parents as sacrifice their children to ambition or avarice. Daily experience indeed shows, that this misconduct of the old, who by their wisdom should be able to direct the young, and who either have, or are thought to have, their welfare in view, is not only subversive of all the bliss of social life, but often gives rise to events of the most tragical nature. As any truth that regards the peace of families, cannot be too often inculcated, I make no doubt the following history, the truth of which is known to some in England, and to almost all France, where it happened, will prove acceptable to the public. At Paris, whose splendor and magnificence strikes every stranger with surprise, where motives of pleasure alone seem to direct the actions of the inhabitants, and politeness renders their conversation desirable, scenes of horror are frequent amidst gaiety and delight; and as human nature is there seen in its most amiable light, it may there, likewise, be seen in its most shocking deformity. It must be owned, without compliment to the French, that shining examples of exalted virtue are frequent amongst them; but when they deviate from its paths, their vices are of as heinous a nature as those of the most abandoned and dis-

solute heathens. The force of truth has made Monsieur Bayle acknowledge, that if all the poisonings and assassinations which the intrigues of Paris give rise to, were known, it would be sufficient to make the most hardened and profligate shudder. Though such bloody events do not happen so often in London, they are, notwithstanding, but too frequent; and as the avarice of the old sometimes conspires with the passions of the young to produce them, the story I am going to relate, will, I hope, be not unedifying to the inhabitants of this city.

A citizen of Paris, who, though he could not amass wealth, for the acquisition whereof he had an inordinate passion, made, by his unwearied efforts, wherewithal to maintain his small family handsomely; he had a daughter, whose beauty seemed to be the gift of heaven, bestowed upon her to increase the happiness of mankind, though it proved, in the end, fatal to herself, her lover and her husband. Monsieur d'Escombas, a citizen advanced in years, could not behold this brilliant beauty without desire; which was in effect, according to the witty observation of Mr. Pope, no better than wishing to be the dragon which was to guard the Hesperian fruit. The father of Isabella, for that was the name of the young lady, was highly pleased at meeting with so advantageous a match for his daughter, as old d'Escombas was very rich, and willing to take her without a portion; which circumstance was sufficient, in the opinion of a man whose ruling passion was a sordid attachment to interest, to atone for the want of person, virtue, sense, and every other qualification. Isabella, who had no alternative but the choice of a convent or of M. d'Escombas, preferred being consigned to his monumental arms, to being as it were buried alive in the melancholy gloom of a convent. The consequences of this unnatural union were such as might be expected; as Madame d'Escombas in secret loathed her husband, her temper was in a short time soured by living with him, and she totally lost that ingenuous turn of mind and virtuous disposition which she had received from nature. Certain it is, that woman's virtue is never in greater danger, than when she is married to a man she dislikes; in such a case, to adhere strictly to the laws of honour, is almost incompatible with the weakness of human nature. Madame d'Escombas was courted by several young gentlemen of an amiable figure and genteel address: and it was not long before her affections were entirely fixed by Monjoy, an engineer, who was equally remarkable for the gentility

of his person, and politeness of his behaviour. There is not a city in the world where married women live with less restraint than at Paris; nothing is more common there, than for a lady to have a declared gallant, if I may be allowed the expression; insomuch that women in that gay and fashionable place may be justly said to change their condition for the reason assigned by Lady Townly in the play, namely, to take off that restraint from their pleasures which they lay under when single. Monsieur d'Escombas was highly mortified to see Monjoy in such high favour with his wife; yet he did not know how to get rid of him, though he had not the least doubt that he had dishonoured his bed. On the other hand, Madame d'Escombas and Monjoy, who looked upon the old man as an obstacle to their pleasures, were impatient for his death; and the lover often declared, in the presence of his mistress, that he was resolved to remove the man who stood between him and the happiness of calling her his own. In a word, he plainly discovered his intention of assassinating her husband; and she, by keeping the secret, seemed to give a tacit consent to his purpose. Their design was to marry publicly as soon as they could despatch a man who was equally odious to them both, as a spy who watched all their motions, and kept them under restraint. It was not long before Monjoy had the opportunity he wished for; he happened accidentally to sup with the husband of his mistress, at a house not far from the Luxemburgh palace, and supper being over, desired him to take a walk with him, which the old man, who dreaded Monjoy as much as he hated him, did not dare to decline. In their way thither, Monjoy found some pretence or other to quarrel with him; and having jostled him down, just as they came to the steps at the entrance of the garden, stabbed him several times in the back, and left him there breathless, and covered with wounds, which were given in such a manner, as made it evident to every body that he had been treacherously killed. It has been justly observed, that murderers often run headlong into the punishment which they have incurred by their crime: the conduct of Monjoy shows this observation to be just. No sooner had he committed the barbarous action above mentioned, but he went to a commissary, whose office is much the same in France with that of a justice of peace in England, and declared upon oath, that he had killed d'Escombas in his own defence. The commissary was at first satisfied with his account, and would have dismissed him; but Monjoy, being in a

great flutter, and continuing to speak, dropt some words which gave the commissary a suspicion of his guilt. He accordingly sent for the body, and his suspicions were confirmed by a view of it. The assassin was then committed to the Chatelet, which is the city prison at Paris as Newgate is here; the body was likewise sent there, and, according to custom, exposed to public view, that the relations and friends of the deceased might come and lay claim to it. No sooner was Madame d'Escombas informed of her lover, but blinded with her compassion she went to visit him in his prison, and was there detained upon a suspicion of being an accomplice in the murder.

In the prison Madame d'Escombas and her gallant had plunged deep in guilty joys; and a child, whose education Madame Adelaïd took charge of, after the tragical death of these lovers, was the fruit of their unlawful amours. Monjoy, though he rioted in bliss, and his passion for Madame d'Escombas continued unabated, was, however, from time to time seized with a deep melancholy; he knew himself to be guilty, and had not the least doubt but he should fall a victim to public justice; he therefore joined with the friends and relations of Madame d'Escombas, in endeavouring to persuade her to go to England, for he was aware of the weakness of human nature, and justly apprehensive that tortures would force from him a confession which would prove fatal to one who was dearer to him than himself. Madame d'Escombas, blinded by her passion for Monjoy, and doomed to destruction, would never give ear to this advice; she thought herself secure in her lover's attachment, and never once imagined that the near view of death might shake the firm resolution he had made never to impeach her. Just about the time that the murder above related was committed, the Parliament of Paris, which is the chief court of justice in the kingdom, and without the concurrence of which, no criminal can be brought to justice, was first removed to Pontoise, and then banished to Soissons, on account of their severe proceedings against the archbishop of Paris, who had given positive orders to all priests and curates, not to administer the sacrament to any but such as could produce certificates from their confessor. This circumstance procured our guilty lovers a year and a half of added life, for that space of time elapsed before the return of the parliament, and till then it was not possible to bring them to trial. They availed themselves of the time which they owed to the absence of their judges, and drank



deep draughts of the cup of love; but it was dashed with poisonous ingredients, which at last made them both rue their ever having tasted it. They were roused from their trance of pleasure by the return of the parliament, which was no sooner recalled, but Monjoy was brought to a trial, and being upon full evidence found guilty of the murder of Monsieur d'Escombas, was condemned to be broke alive upon the wheel. Amidst all the torments which he suffered in receiving the question ordinary and extraordinary, he persisted to affirm that he had no accomplices; and the guilty wife of d'Escombas would have escaped from justice, had not a principle of religion, imbibed from his infancy, had more power upon the mind of her lover, than even the most excruciating bodily pain.

The confessor who attended Monjoy upon the scaffold, refused positively to give him absolution, if he did not discover his accomplices, telling him in the most peremptory sense, that he could not hope for salvation, if he concealed them from the knowledge of the world. This had such an effect upon the unhappy man, who was on the verge of eternity, that he desired Madame d'Escombas might be sent for: she was accordingly brought in a coach, and Monjoy told her in the presence of the judges, that she was privy to the murder of her husband. Upon hearing this she immediately fainted away, and was carried back to prison. Her lover was, pursuant to his sentence, broken alive upon the wheel, after having made a pathetic remonstrance to the standers by; and Madame d'Escombas was about a month afterwards hanged at the Greve at Paris, upon his impeachment. Such examples as these show, that the misfortunes which attend unlawful love, are often owing to the cruelty of parents, who, by tyrannizing over the hearts of their children, lead them into that ruin which they might have escaped, if treated with indulgence.

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#### AN ALLEGORY.

IN a dream I thought myself in a solitary temple—I saw a kind of phantom coming towards me, but as he drew near, his form expanded and became more than human; his robe hung majestically down to his feet; six wings whiter than snow, whose extremities were edged with gold, covered a part of his body: then I saw him quit his material substance, which he had put on not to terrify me:

his body was of all the colours of the rainbow. He took me by the hair, and I was sensible I was travelling in the etherial plains without any dread, with the rapidity of an arrow sent from a bow drawn by a supple and nervous arm.

A thousand glowing orbs rolled beneath me: but I could only cast a rapid glance on all those globes distinguished by the striking colours with which they are diversified.

I now suddenly perceived so beautiful, so flourishing, so fertile a country, that I conceived a strong desire to alight upon it. My wishes were instantly gratified; I felt myself gently landed on its surface, where I was surrounded by a balmy atmosphere. I found myself reposing at the dawn on the soft verdant grass. I stretched out my arms, in token of gratitude, to my celestial guide, who pointed to a resplendent sun, towards which, swiftly rising, he disappeared in the luminous body.

I rose and imagined myself to be transported into the garden of Eden. Every thing inspired my soul with soft tranquillity. The most profound peace covered this new globe; nature was ravishing and incorruptible here, and a delicious freshness expanded my sense to ecstasy; a sweet odour accompanied the air I breathed; my heart, which beat with an unusual power, was immersed in a sea of rapture; while pleasure, like a pure and immortal light, penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul.

The inhabitants of this happy country came to meet me; and after saluting me, they took me by the hand. Their noble countenances inspired confidence and respect; innocence and happiness were depicted in their looks; they often lifted their eyes towards heaven, and as often uttered a name which I afterwards knew to be that of the Eternal, while their cheeks were moistened with the tears of gratitude.

I experienced great emotion while I conversed with these sublime beings. They poured out their hearts with the most sincere tenderness; and the voice of reason, most majestic, and no less melting, was, at the same time, conveyed to my enraptured ear.

I soon perceived this abode was totally different from that which I had left. A divine impulse made me fly into their arms: I bowed my knees to them; but being raised up in the most endearing manner, I was pressed to the bosoms that inclosed such excellent hearts, and I conceived a presentiment of celestial amity, of that amity

which united their souls, and formed the greatest portion of their felicity.

The angel of darkness, with all his artifice, was never able to discover the entrance into this world! Notwithstanding his ever watchful malice, he never found out the means to spread his poison over this happy globe. Anger, envy, and pride, were there unknown; the happiness of one appeared the happiness of all! An ecstatic transport incessantly elevating their souls at the sight of the magnificent and bountiful hand that collected over their heads the most astonishing prodigies of the creation.

The lovely morning, with her humid saffron wings, distilled the pearly dew from the shrubs and flowers, and the rays of the rising sun multiplied the most enchanting colours, when I perceived a wood embellished by the opening dawn.

The youth of both sexes there sent forth hymns of adoration towards heaven, and were filled at the same time with the grandeur and majesty of God, which rolled almost visibly over their heads; for, in this world of innocence, he vouchsafed to manifest himself by means unknown to our weak understandings.

All things announced his august presence; the serenity of the air, the dyes of the flowers, the brilliancy of the insects: a kind of universal sensibility spread over all beings, and which vivified bodies that seemed the least susceptible of it, every thing bore the appearance of sentiment; and the birds stopped in the midst of their flight, as if attentive to the affecting modulations of their voices.

But no pencil can express the ravishing countenance of the young beauties whose bosoms breathed love. Who can describe that love of which we have not any idea, that love for which we have no name, that love, the lot of pure intelligent beings, divine love, which they only can conceive and feel? The tongue of man, incapable, must be silent! The remembrance of this enchanting place suspends at this moment all the faculties of my soul.

The sun was rising—the pencil falls from my hand. Oh! Thomson, never did your muse view such a sun! What a world and what magnificent order! I trod, with regret, on the flowery plants, indued, like that which we call sensitive, with a quick and lively feeling; they bent under my foot, only to rise with more brilliancy: the fruit gently dropped, on the first touch, from the complying branch, and had scarcely gratified the palate, when the delicious sensation of its juices was felt glowing in every vein: the eye, more

piercing, sparkled with uncommon lustre; the ear was more lively; the heart, which expanded itself over all nature, seemed to possess and enjoy its fertile extent: the universal enjoyment did not disturb any individual: for union multiplied their delights, and they esteemed themselves less happy in their own fruition than in the happiness of others.

The sun did not resemble the comparative paleness and weakness which illuminates our gloomy terrestrial prison; yet the eye could bear to gaze on it, and, in a manner, plunge itself in a kind of ecstasy in its mild and pure light: it enlivened at once the sight and the understanding, and even penetrated the soul. The bodies of those fortunate persons became, as it were, transparent: while each read in his brother's heart the sentiments of affability and tenderness with which himself was affected.

There darted from the leaves of all the shrubs that the planet enlightened a luminous matter which resembled at a distance all the colours of the rainbow: its orb, which was never eclipsed, was crowned with sparkling rays that the daring prism of Newton could not divide. When this planet set, six brilliant moons floated in the atmosphere: their progression, in different orbits, each night formed a new exhibition. The multitude of stars, which seem to us as if scattered by chance, were here seen in their true point of view, and the order of the universe appeared in all its pomp and splendor.

In this happy country, when a man gave way to sleep, his body, which had none of the properties of terrestrial elements, gave no opposition to the soul, but contemplated in a vision bordering on reality, the lucid region, the throne of the Eternal, to which it was soon to be elevated. Men awakened from a light slumber without perturbation or uneasiness: enjoying futurity by a forcible sentiment of immortality, being intoxicated with the image of an approaching felicity, exceeding that which they already enjoyed.

Grief, the fatal result of the imperfect sensibility of our rude frames, was unknown to these innocent men: a light sensation warned them of the objects that could hurt them: and nature removed them from the danger, as a tender mother would gently draw her child by the hand from a pit-fall.

I breathed more freely in this habitation of joy and concord: my existence became most valuable to me: but in proportion as the charms which surrounded me were lively, the greater was my sor-



now when my ideas returned to the globe I had quitted. All the calamities of the human race united as in one point to overwhelm my heart, and I exclaimed piteously—"Alas! the world I inhabited formerly resembled yours: but peace, innocence, chaste pleasures, soon vanished. Why was I not born among you? What a contrast! The earth that was my sorrowful abode is incessantly filled with tears and sighs: there the smaller number oppress the greater: the demon of property infects what he touches, and what he covets."

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## DUKE OF MEDINA CELI.

IN consequence of the defeat at Saragossa, and the very low state to which France was reduced, Philip V. apprehended he should be obliged to relinquish his pretensions to the throne of Spain. Amongst others, it was suspected, that the Duke of Medina Celi was in the interest of his competitor, Charles. To render so powerful a prince inactive, would be almost equal to a victory; but the method to effect it seemed difficult, especially in the exhausted state to which Philip was reduced. Sir Patrick Lawless, an Irish gentleman, then a colonel in the French service, charged himself singly to secure the person of the Duke. Having previously concerted all his measures, he repaired to the ducal palace, as charged with a special commission from Philip. He invited the duke to take a walk on a fine terrace, in order to converse the more freely. As the conversation was interesting, they insensibly rambled to a considerable distance from the suite of the duke, until they came to a passage which led to the high road, where the colonel had a carriage in waiting. Lawless in a few words told his highness, that he must directly, and without the least appearance of restraint, take a seat in the coach; as he had engaged, at the hazard of his head, to bring him to Madrid, where he would find Philip ready to receive him with open arms. The determined tone with which these words were uttered, the appearance of the man, and above all, his character for resolution and bravery, induced the duke to resort to the only alternative. They soon arrived at Madrid, where he met with a most gracious reception. The battle of Almanza, which happened some time after, made the duke deem his visiter his preserver, as well as that of his immense estate. Lawless was raised in a short time to

the rank of lieutenant-general, and governor of Majorca; and in the course of a few years, Philip appointed him his ambassador to the court of Versailles.

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PHILIP II. KING OF SPAIN.

COUNT Egmont advised this prince to break with France, in order to prevent the troubles that were beginning to rise in Flanders: he answered, "I had rather lose all Flanders, than so scandalously violate the agreement I have made with my brother the most christian king, and so young as he is too."

On his death-bed he gave his successor this advice:—"Keep your dominions, if possible, in perpetual peace; give them good ministers, rewarding the good and punishing the bad."

He often dissembled those injuries done to him which he either could not or would not revenge; observing, that it was a great part of prudence occasionally to pretend not to be well informed of certain things.

At his first coming to the crown, he ordered his judges, in all doubtful cases between him and any of his subjects, to be always sure to decide against the sovereign.

On receiving the news of the destruction of the celebrated Spanish armada, he merely said, "I sent my fleet to fight the English, not the winds: the will of God be done!"

Philip was present at an Auto-da-fé, where several persons were to be burnt for heresy. One of them, Don John de Cesa, as he was passing by him, exclaimed, "Sire, how can you permit so many unfortunate persons to suffer! How can you be witness of so horrid a sight without shuddering!"—Philip replied coolly, If my son, sir, were suspected of heresy, I should give him up myself to the inquisition. My detestation of you and your companions is so great that I would not hesitate to act myself as your executioner, if no other could be found.

Soon after he had imprisoned his son, Don Carlos, he wrote to Pius the Fifth to inform him, that Don Carlos, from his earliest youth, had so vicious a ferocity of disposition, that it had ever disdained all his paternal instructions!

## DOMESTIC REVIEW.

MEMOIRS OF A LIFE CHIEFLY PASSED IN PENNSYLVANIA WITHIN THE LAST SIXTY YEARS, WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS ON THE GENERAL OCCURRENCES, CHARACTER AND SPIRIT OF THAT EVENTFUL PERIOD.—Printed at Harrisburgh.

ACCIDENT threw this book in our way, and curiosity to see what sort of biographical work that might be which issued from a printing press on the late wild banks of the Susquehanna, induced us to take a glance at it; with very little expectation, however, of meeting any thing that could sustain us unwearied though a volume of three hundred and seventy-eight pages, and those by no means short ones. A life confined to Pennsylvania, and passed, as the starting-post of the book seemed to indicate, in the sequestered parts of the state, promised little of the strange occurrences, the whimsical conjunctures, or the checkered incidents, which, by agitating the mind and interesting the heart, remunerate a reader for the labour of perusal. A cottage, a parsonage, and an amiable family, might no doubt exist on the banks of the Susquehanna, as well as in the village of Wakefield;—the genius to describe them too belongs exclusively to no climate, nor did it leave the world along with Goldsmith; but in a state of society so little complex as that which still blesses this state, could hardly, we thought, supply adventure for a very amusing biography of sixty years' duration.

It often chances, however, that where least is expected, most is found; and so it happened in this instance,—for we had not perused above a dozen pages when we found ourselves attracted with a force we have not for a long time been in the habit of experiencing; and before we had proceeded much farther, were so completely spell-bound, that we could not tear ourselves away till the unwelcome intruder of the night,—the watchman,—proclaimed that he “scented the morning air.” The succeeding day bringing along with it its demands of necessary labour, obliged us to postpone the perusal of the residue; nor has it been in our power, without neglecting a more imperious duty, to proceed to the end of this meritorious publication: we cannot, therefore, speak of it so fully as we wish and intend to do; and yet we cannot prevail upon ourselves to withhold from this number a few words respecting the impression it made upon us; reserving for a future day, a more particular de-

tail of its many claims to public attention. Though the author has not given his name to the work, he is so circumstantial with regard to facts, dates, and persons, and so unreserved upon the subject of his relatives and connexions, that it is evident he is not very anxious to conceal himself, and that when the book is circulated, the author's name will be no secret. From what we have already observed in the course of our reading it, nothing is more clear to us, than that all the old inhabitants of the state, and particularly those who acted principal parts in the important drama of seventy-six, will immediately recognise him: in which case, the general opinion respecting the work will naturally be influenced by the feelings of individuals, and take an occasional tincture from passion more than from discreet judgment. Of the author, or his connexions,—of the transactions he adverts to, or the persons concerned in them, we have no knowledge whatever: of course, therefore, we make use of our judgment wholly upon the intrinsic value of the work itself; and viewing it dispassionately, we have no scruple whatever in declaring, that having read many works of the same kind, we do not remember one which appeared to us more attractive, or more deserving of praise. Every line bears the stamp of sincerity; the author asserts himself and his opinions with the frankness of a gentleman, the freedom of a true republican, and the boldness of a soldier,—yet without a tincture of egotism. Of himself he speaks as he would speak of another in his situation; and while he addresses his readers, he seems as if conversing with his friends, or amusing a domestic circle round his blazing hearth, with a simple unostentatious recital of the leading events of his life.

Possessing the power so forcibly to strike the imagination, and interest the feelings, of an entire stranger, how irresistible must these memoirs *come home to the business and bosoms* of those contemporaries of the author, who, in every transaction alluded to, will find some fond memorial of friends who still live in their attachment,—of happy times that have gone by them,—and of proud and pleasing events they have witnessed; and who, while they contemplate the occurrences recorded in these pages, may say with no less truth than could the author when he wrote them,

Quæque ipse miserrima vidi  
Et quorum pars magna fui.



## DRAMATIC CENSOR.

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THEATRICAL JOURNAL, FOR SEPTEMBER, 1811.

IN obedience to the wishes expressed by some of our subscribers; and perhaps entertained by all, we propose to give the observations we have to make on the performances of the actors, regularly in the number for that month in which they take place, and to postpone to the recess the consideration of such plays as we think deserving of a particular analysis. To this end, we have adopted the plans of the best theatrical publications in London, and like them will confine our observations to such things as will be most likely to claim an immediate interest in public opinion. Of performances which have been already noticed in this work, or of plays which have been for so long a time and so frequently represented that every frequenter of the theatre knows all that can be said of them, nothing will be said, unless it be to notice some novel circumstance, some new performer, or some unusual acts of merit or misconduct, which call for the wreath or for the rod. There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell the world that Warren was excellent in old Rapid, Sir Peter Teazle, Cacofigo, or Falstaff;—that Wood was delightful in young Rapid, Tangent, or Harry Dornton; or Mrs. Wood interesting in Susan Ashfield, Jessy Oatland, and all such characters;—that M'Kenzie is good in old Norval; Jefferson, Blisset and Francis exquisitely droll, and Mrs. Francis not less so. These are facts already so much taken for granted, that if we were disposed to make the public think otherwise, they would not believe what we said. We will not, therefore, weary our readers and overload our summaries with propositions of that self-evident kind, and we are sure that our friends will approve of it. Having thus explained our purpose and motives, we proceed to our Journal for the Philadelphia theatre for the season 1811-12.

*Monday, September 9th, 1811, opened with TOWN AND COUNTRY, and OF AGE TO-MORROW.*

For the criticism on this comedy see Vol. I. p. 66. The only change of consequence in the cast this night was in the perform-

ance of the Hon. Mrs. Glenroy by Mrs. Twaits, who sustained the character respectably.

*Wednesday, September 11th,*

SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER—WAGS OF WINDSOR.

Mrs. Mason made her first appearance in Philadelphia this evening in the character of the Widow Cheerly, and received the most unequivocal marks of approbation. Her merit is indeed of that sterling kind, the value of which all conditions and capacities are capable of perceiving, and must admire. In that particular department of comedy, to which the sprightly and benevolent widow belongs, we much doubt whether Mrs. Mason has a superior—in this country she certainly has not an equal. In characters of humour, it is very difficult to avoid coarseness without dwindling into insipidity (for in the very nature of humour there inheres more or less of that robust vivacity which fastidiousness would call coarse) and in the characteristic performance of them, a lady runs the risk of having imputed to her that which belongs, not to herself, but to the character. Mrs. Mason had the peculiar felicity to hit the mark with great exactness. Her humour was distinguished by ease and elegance no less than by spirit and vivacity. If she fell short of Miss Farren in the courtly graces, and deportment of the highest polished life, her humour was more forcible—and if she excited less laughter perhaps than Mrs. Abington could have done, it may also be said that she exhibited none of that masculine confidence, which so detracts from the delicacy of females, and with which, to borrow the amiable Thomson's words, they "*roughen to the sense, and all the winning softness of the sex is lost.*" The polished manners and elegant deportment of the woman of fashion were in Mrs. Mason's widow blended with the bewitching sportiveness, and undefinable fascination of high comedy. Through the whole of her performance there was nothing that approximated vulgarity, nothing coarse, nothing forced, nothing studied, nothing which the most fastidious taste would wish were otherwise: none of that broad grimace—none of that common-place artifice called stage-trick, which, when it ceases to strain, loses its hold—none of that frisking affectation of sprightliness—none of that daubed overdoing which, like caricature in painting, raises coarse merriment at the expense of nature, propriety, and truth——But all was of that refined, polished, yet natural and pungent quality of humour, that skilfully attenuated pleasantry, which, if I may be allowed the expression,

casts a mild sunshine over the heart, filling it with pure enjoyment—which rather exhilarates the spirits than provokes laughter, and imparts sensations of an order much superior to those of mere side-shaking merriment.

With the exception of Cooke, we know of no performer whose first appearance seemed to make so deep and pleasing an impression as did that of Mrs. Mason. And it is perhaps the only instance of general applause, unalloyed by the slightest disapprobation. For having made it our business to collect the opinions of as many as we could speak to on the subject, we can with truth affirm that not one spoke of Mrs. Mason's *Widow Cheerly* in less than terms of unmixed praise. But one sentiment prevailed through the house—and it cannot be doubted that if this lady's comedy be all nearly equal to her *Widow Cheerly*, and her tragedy (which we can scarcely hope) but half as good as her comedy, she will hold as high a place in public favour here as her ambition, if it be at all reasonable, can prompt her to expect.

Having said so much for our elegant visiter, it becomes our duty to say a few words of our old friends, to whom we in common with the public owe so much for the capital entertainment of this evening. In most of its characters the comedy was performed in as great perfection as imagination could well reach to. Warren, Wood and Jefferson were so peculiarly excellent, that we should have no hesitation in setting them against the performers of the same characters in any theatre in Europe. Jefferson afforded us uncommon gratification, not only on account of *Timothy Quaint*, which he did to perfection,—but because, whether it was owing to the particular nature of the character, or to a laudable disposition of return from his devious wanderings to the path of pure nature, he was so simple, so natural, and free from extravagance,—so exactly that which we once viewed with admiration, and for which he is marked by nature, that we could not help greeting him as a friend returned after a long absence,—Jefferson was himself again.

It would be unpardonable to omit the praise due to Mrs. Mason for her delivery of the epilogue in character: in which she showed herself not less a mistress of accomplished utterance, than an adept in that species of humour.

*Friday, September 13th,*

PIZARRO—THE WEATHERCOCK,

*Saturday, September 14th,*

SPEED THE PLOUGH—DON JUAN.

This comedy is so well known, and has been so often before the public in pretty nearly the same cast as it was presented in this evening, that we made no scruple to go into the country, upon the presumption that there was no likelihood of any thing new occurring to demand our notice. We were, however, greatly mistaken; and we consider it as peculiarly unfortunate that our absence deprived us of the twofold gratification of seeing the character of Henry better performed (we speak upon manifold and indubitable authority) than it ever was in this country, and that by a youth whose private qualities we have always approved, and of whose success in his profession we have long entertained good hopes, having for two seasons back prognosticated it with confidence,—and we may add too, in contradiction to the opinions of some persons whose judgment we greatly respected. If he were ten feet high instead of six, Barrett is still but a boy; for what more could even a giant of seven.een years of age be considered; and as we contemplated him in his fifteenth and sixteenth years, (the most disadvantageous time of life for an actor in voice, face, shape, every thing,) and perceived that notwithstanding so many disadvantages, he always evinced a correctness in his readings and his action, for which we often looked in vain among his elders, we could not help predicting that as his person filled and knit into strength, as his face rose from baby softness towards the muscular expression of manhood, and as his voice lost that disagreeable tone inseparable from the neutral intervening time of life between boy and man, he would become a marked favourite with the public. His performance of Tressel last season, when Mr. Cooke played Richard, justified our prediction, and drew flattering acknowledgments from the audience. His Henry, however, has gone much further, and laid a strong foundation for the favourable opinion of the public, upon which we have little doubt his own *industry* and good sense will enable him to build in a few seasons a structure that nothing but matchless neglect can overset. We most heartily wish him success, and look forward with sanguine expectation for the time when we shall be enabled to add the character of one of the best of players, to that of the most exemplary son.



*Monday, September 16th,*

LOVERS VOWS—HIGHLAND REEL.

The novelty of this evening was a young actor of the name of Spiller, in the character of Frederick. This gentleman, who comes from the Haymarket theatre, in London, has very good requisites for the stage. His person, though rather below the middle size, is well-formed. His voice is sufficiently powerful, and his utterance articulate. His action was by no means ungraceful, but rather redundant, and injured by more use of one arm than was necessary. This, however, we thought at the time, and have since been more persuaded, arose from an endeavour to get rid of the appearance of embarrassment under which it was evident he laboured, notwithstanding his sturdy efforts to hide it. We have more than once said, that we always hail diffidence in a young actor, as a very favourable prognostic: for modesty confers a grace on every virtue and every excellence. Mr. Spiller's diffidence, however, did not prevent him from evincing much natural spirit, and considerable judgment in the conception of his part. Upon the whole, as friends to the drama, we cannot help feeling great pleasure that the Theatre has received such an acquisition as Mr. Spiller certainly will be, if the circumstance of his being independent of the stage (which we understand he is) does not in the end make him inattentive, and slacken that industry without which no one can ever hope to be a great and respectable actor. It is said that Mr. Spiller can boast not only of very handsome mental talents, but of very respectable literary attainments; that he writes well,—that some of his productions have received public applause, and the acknowledgments of some eminent dramatists in England,—and that persons of no less celebrity than Mr. Colman, Mr. Morton, and others, have backed his claims to the attention of men of genius in this country, by unequivocal testimony to his talents and acquirements. It is also whispered, that some of his productions will be brought forward on our stage. Taking these things for granted, we cannot be wrong in saying that he is indeed an acquisition.

*Wednesday, September 18th,*

FOUNDLING OF THE FOREST—MODERN ANTIQUES.

Miss Mary White, a younger sister of the young lady who, in the last season but one, made her *debut* in the character of Louisa

Dudley, appeared this evening for the first time in the character of Geraldine, De Valmont's niece. This young lady has been for some time under the tuition of Mr. Fennell, who undertook the office under the impression that she had talents which only wanted judicious instruction to obtain her in due time a respectable rank in the theatre. It was not likely that a person of Mr. Fennell's experience and acknowledged judgment, could be very wrong on such an occasion; and we are, on many accounts, happy in being able to add our opinion in confirmation of that gentleman's. Exclusive of a very elegant person, and a face of more than common beauty, Miss Mary White possesses an audible, clear, and very harmonious voice. In her reading she showed that she sufficiently understood what she was about, though her speaking suffered, as might well be expected, from natural timidity, and the embarrassment inseparable from that most distressing of all situations, a first appearance.

Mr. Spiller performed Florian in a manner that tended rather to increase than diminish the opinion we, from his first appearance, entertained, that he is an acquisition to our theatre. This line of acting, in which he is fitted to walk with considerable reputation, is one in which our Theatre stood in need of such an assistant.

*Friday, September 20th,*

**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING—BUDGET OF BLUNDERS.**

We have never received more unmixed satisfaction than this admirable comedy afforded us, this evening. Nor can we call to remembrance an instance of a play carried through with so much deserving of praise, and so very little liable to censure. The principal characters were sustained in a capital style: the greater part of the others were respectably performed, and no part was so ill done, as to detract from the general pleasure afforded by the play.

To the merit of Wood in genteel comedy, even the most uncandid of his enemies are compelled to bear testimony. We have always professed ourselves his admirers in that department; and indeed we consider him as so entirely unrivalled in it here, that respectably as he fills some parts of another kind, we cannot help viewing him when he plays them, as rather inferior to himself. In Benedick we consider him as having risen much above his usual level, even in genteel comedy. To personate a humourist of such whimsical singularity as Benedick, and to give full effect to his strange

but incomparable wit, without touching on the confines of buffoonery, is very difficult,—very difficult to avoid being too much or too little comical; for, with all his humour, Benedick is a finished gentleman, a soldier, and a man of sense and moral worth. Nor do we remember to have ever seen it performed by one who could entirely sink the actor. This we hold to be the great essential in high comedy, perhaps more in Benedick than any other character; and in that respect Wood certainly came nearer the mark than any one we have seen. He had not the volatile spirit, or comic vivacity of Lewis, nor had he the force, or point of Henderson; but he was less the actor than either, and as such was, we own it, the Benedick of our imagination, to all intents and purposes. Contemplating his Benedick, we cannot, out of compliment to customary arrangement, separate him from his Beatrice. In saying that Mrs. Mason, in Beatrice, made good every expectation we had formed from her Widow Cheerly, and every prediction we had ventured to pronounce in her favour, we might be thought to have said enough. It must naturally be gratifying to us, and we confess that it makes us proud too, to find the public sentiment in unison with ours. That we are seldom at variance with it is a truth of which we are not ashamed to boast; and it is with no common exultation we state that without the exception of a single individual, the opinion we have from the outset expressed of this admirable actress, is the opinion of every one, and they are many with whom we have conversed upon the subject:

This comedy is, from the first to the last, one uninterrupted tissue of wit and comic humour. It is all Shakspeare. Like certain islands in the eastern seas, it is illumined with a continual uninterrupted series of coruscations of lightning. Benedick and Beatrice are evidently the favourite children of the author, and upon them he has lavished unsparingly the treasures of his genius. To do such characters ample justice, not only refined humour, but great skill in speaking are necessary to the performers. Mrs. Mason showed herself mistress of both; in both her performance was perfect and unforced, and it adds not a little to her praise, that she chastened down, and softened into amenity, several parts in which the old fashioned colouring of Shakspeare was too coarse, too strong, and too glaring for our *this-day* taste. The robust pen of our bard, like the club of Hercules, sometimes shivers with the very wind of it, the dainty fine spun nerves of our modern auditors,

Dogberry and Verges, had most able representatives in Jefferson and Blissett. Blissett did for Verges all that could be done for it; but in the Dogberry of Jefferson there was a richness of humour, and at the same time a steady conformity to truth and nature, that we have rarely seen equalled, never surpassed. From Parsons himself, our much lamented favourite, we never received, in a part of the same length, more true comic delight, than from Dogberry's ridiculous assumption of superiority over, and pity for the weakness of Verges, as it was pourtrayed this night by Jefferson. Were there not one other scene in the play worth looking at, we should think this alone enough to bring a whole city to see *Much ado about Nothing* over and over again. But being, as it is, from beginning to end one of the most fascinating productions of human genius,—delightful in every aspect,—and being performed in all its parts better than any we have ever seen in this country, we cannot help expressing a hope that it will be repeated, and a confidence, which we rest not merely on the merits of the play, but on the sound taste of the public, that it will fill more than one, or even two houses this season.

*Saturday, September 21st,*

CASTLE SPECTRE—RAISING THE WIND.

*Monday, September 23d,*

HEIR AT LAW—BLUEBEARD.

*Wednesday, September 25th,*

VENONI—THE CITIZEN.

This tragedy was got up, we believe, for the purpose of introducing a novice in the character of Vemoni. On such an occasion it will no doubt be expected that of the person who appeared for the first time in so interesting a character, we should at least offer an opinion. We must, however, be excused from saying any thing upon the subject, till one more attempt at least on the part of that gentleman, shall enable us to make up our minds respecting his pretensions.

Miss M. White appeared for the second time, and in the character of Josepha met a very flattering reception. She was frequently and loudly applauded; and one compliment, which any actress might be proud of, was paid to her by many persons in different



parts of the house—namely, that there were some tones in her voice which resembled those of Mrs. WARREN. The remark could not well have been made, as it certainly was, at the same time, by different people, in distant parts of the house, if there were not some truth in it.

Considering it highly probable that this young lady's progress will be of importance to the stage, we think a few hints will be well bestowed upon her. Her natural powers are no doubt considerable; and from Mr. Fennell's judicious instructions she could scarcely have failed to derive much benefit in her reading and utterance; but the direction given to her action is radically bad, and ought to be got rid of as soon as possible—for until it is got rid of, she need never hope to acquire a correct style. The too great elevation, expansion and winding about of her arms, as general action, is unbecoming in any character or either sex; but is peculiarly unfit for a female, whether she performs the lady or the heroine—being neither natural, dignified, expressive, nor elegant. As it is an acquired habit, however, it can soon be laid aside: that done, every day's practice will bring some new accession of grace and propriety, and her action will soon correspond with her other qualifications.

In Maria, in the Citizen, Mrs. Mason maintained the great superiority as a comic actress, which she evinced in Widow Cheerly and Beatrice.

*Friday, September 27th,*

RICHARD III.—IRISH WIDOW.

The selection of Richard, so soon after the impression made by Cooke, and so immediately preceding that great actor's intended return to our boards, was certainly a bold attempt of Mr. Cooper; and by the public in general was considered as one of those uselessly hardy enterprises, a failure in which was not only probable, but by no means to be lamented. The theatre, and the conduct of the actors, are here, what the irregularities of the bon ton, and the little incidents which supply Doctors Commons with pastime, are in England: they constitute the great exhaustless fund from which the *charitable* draw their resources for the tea-table, and pay in their share of tittle-tattle to the benevolent coteries of the city; and the assumption of Richard by Mr. Cooper, was ascribed by many to motives that never found harbour in his bosom. What

an admirer might, without overstraining his devotion, have called bold and laudable ambition, those of another complexion censured as unwarrantable;—neither of these parties, however, had any thing to do with it. As a mere matter of prudence, it belonged to Mr. Cooper, and to him alone. Of the result we can only say, that if there were any persons malicious enough to hope that he would disgrace himself, they were most egregiously mistaken;—and if there were any sanguine enough to hope that he would inhanche his professional reputation by it, they were greatly deceived also. Speaking, however, with a view to the public judgment, it has been useful, inasmuch as it has served to draw the marked line of distinction between Messrs. Cooke and Cooper, which, before that, critics might write and talk about for ever, without ascertaining truth with any reasonable degree of precision.

Of the dissimulation, the plausibility, the cunning, the sarcastic, secret malignity, which constitute the basis of the character of Richard, there is, (comparatively speaking,) hardly a trace discernible in Mr. Cooper's representation of it. As little was there of those subtle discriminations of meaning which evince the philosophic actor,—of those various inflexions and animated expressions of countenance that speak the inmost soul,—or of

Those various powers which lie  
Within the magic circle of the eye,

and which distinguish Cooke from all other actors. The predominant object of Mr. Cooper in his performance, seemed to be, to act the part in every respect differently from Mr. Cooke;—in doing of which, it would seem as if he forgot that Shakspeare's intention, and not Mr. Cooke's performance, was the clue by which he ought to be guided; unless it were first ascertained that Mr. Cooke's conception of the character was wrong, and ought to be avoided. On this point we may be permitted to affirm, that an actor who widely departs from Mr. Cooke's conception of Richard, must lamentably depart from the character itself; and that if he plays it in antithetical contradiction to him, he must go positively wrong. Hence it was that the craft, the smothered fury, the dissimulation and the policy of Richard, so miraculously pourtrayed by Mr. Cooke, were either lost in stormy vociferation, or sunk in an uninteresting calm: and hence too, arose the universal remark, that Mr. Cooper was formerly much greater in Richard than he was on this night.

In the opening soliloquy,—in the courtship scene with Lady Anne, and in the tent scene, Mr. Cooper deserves much praise; in the last we think him much superior to Mr. Cooke. The scene with Lady Anne was very fine too; and as a piece of courtship, taken abstractedly, better than that of Mr. Cooke,—but as the courtship of the hellish Richard, it was very much inferior. The lurking demon did not grin through the suitor's smiles,—the lively malice mixt with vitious desire which glistened in the eyes of the one, did not in the other show and speak the fiendlike soul of Richard. Yet it was very fine acting, and sufficiently specious to impress some judgments with an idea of successful competition.

Of the tent scene we can safely avouch it as our opinion, that it has hardly ever been exceeded by any actor. That it is superior to Mr. Cooke's, is saying less of it than it deserves; because, with the exception of the one speech,—the first,—the latter is but a sorry performance. Many find it difficult to account for this lamentable falling off in so great an actor as Cooke. An account for it, however, may be easily found in personal infirmity,—some injury accidentally received, we suppose, in the knees.

Mr. Cooper's dying scene was well done. There was a fine practical imitation of the anguish of a wounded man; and in the writhing of his body when he received the wound, and in his manner of falling, there was much stage effect: but in the subsequent part,—in the actual dying, comparison would rather injure Mr. Cooper.

Upon the whole, Mr. Cooper displayed in Richard great physical powers, and much spirit. But the plan upon which he played it was radically so wrong, that we are persuaded a person who never read or saw Richard but in his performance of it, would have but a very inadequate conception of the character as meditated and described by Shakspeare.

*Saturday, September 28th,*

HAMLET—SYLVESTER DAGGERWOOD.

We cannot congratulate Mr. Cooper upon any improvement in his performance of Hamlet: to us he appeared more careless than usual. In the scene in which he used most to excel—we mean that which passes at the play before the king and queen, he fell short of his accustomed force—and the speech "He poisons him in the garden for his estate; his name's Gonzago," &c., was "come tardy off."—Of his old imperfections Mr. Cooper is more tenacious. Of

these there are two which he certainly owes it to the public and himself to "reform altogether." One is his disregard of the author's words, in which he is so constantly imperfect, that we cannot call to mind having seen him play a single part in which he did not make many and very great mutilations:—even in his *Hamlet*, which by this time he ought to have at his tongue's end, there were several omissions, and some whimsical substitutions: sometimes lines, sometimes large and important portions of a speech are left out. This demands his immediate attention.

Another fault is the very disagreeable and protracted sibilation in his utterance at the termination of lines or periods which end with a hissing sound. This is a subject upon which we gave our sentiments long ago, in another work, to which we have some reason to believe he was not altogether inattentive. The fault has since increased upon him. Mr. Cooper cannot but know that too much sibilation is one of the greatest deformities of our language, one which, more than any other, affords foreigners a pretext for censuring it; and is owing to the multiplied introduction of the hissing sound of *s*, *c*, *ti-ce*, &c. which so frequently occur in it. Unnecessarily to increase that deformity is unpardonable. Yet in lines or periods that terminate with *s* or *ce*, or any other sibilating sound, the hissing is carried on by Mr. Cooper as if it were thought a beauty, or as if organs were wanting to stop it.—This evil is not confined to Mr. Cooper himself—his rank on the stage makes his example injurious to others, and his defect passes over to his admirers and imitators.—We forbear to mention names; but there is one lady, whose speech seems as if it were employed to hiss herself.—What shall we say of the termination of the word *silence*, *ce* being carried on with a protracted hiss of the duration of three or four seconds?

That this is a great fault, every one must admit—that it is a fault which, uncorrected, example would encourage and extend, may easily be proved. It is the critic's office to mark it, and if persevered in, it is his duty to hold it up to public censure.

*Monday, September 30th,*

STRANGER—OSCAR AND MALVINA.



FOREIGN CRITICISM.

WE have intelligence from London of a very curious and novel dramatic production lately represented at the Hay-market theatre, and intitled in the bills "*A grand dressed Rehearsal of Tragico-Comico-Anglo-Germanico-Hippo-Ono-Dramatico Romance, a new piece in two acts, called 'THE QUADRUPEDES OF QUEDLINBURGH, OR THE ROVERS OF WEIMAR.'*" It is intended, in the first place, as a satire upon the taste of the town for equestrian spectacle, and as it was announced with more than ordinary tone, a more than ordinary expectation was excited by it. The principle of the piece is the same as that of the Rehearsal, and of Mr. Sheridan's Critic, but not equal to either.

The other object of the play is the ridicule of German language, plot, and sentiment; of those unnatural transitions of passion, and combinations of humour and character, which are nowhere found but on the German stage. The piece rehearsed is taken from the admired burlesque on the German School, which some ten or twelve years ago appeared in "*The Anti-Jacobin*," which has been frequently attributed to Mr. Canning, and which was said to be intended, as a witty raillery of the style of Southey. The characters of the German drama were very well characterized in the prologue, as sentimental pickpockets, heroic highwaymen, and innocent adulteresses.

Such is the object of the piece, and certainly the wishes of the audience went with its success. "The question now, (says the London Critic) is as to the execution." He then proceeds thus:

"There are chiefly two forms of comic ridicule: the one is the heightening a folly or absurdity, by increasing as it were its effect and dimensions, by putting it forth under circumstances calculated to exhibit its deviation from nature. This may be termed comic caricature. The following is an instance of it. The Germans are very extravagant in their feelings and sympathies and sentiments; it is a ridicule of this extravagance; two ladies are introduced as passengers in the Brunswick wagon. They talk together about three minutes, and then perceiving their congenial natures propose an eternal friendship, and deluge each other's neck with tears. Now, there is no objection to this kind of caricature, as long as it has a show of ridicule,—as long as it is a parody of a similar absurdity.

By itself, however, and independent of any aim at ridicule, it is sheer nonsense."

"The second kind of ridicule is burlesque; which is of two kinds, the high burlesque, which parodies low images and affairs in a lofty style, and the low burlesque, which degrades what is serious and lofty, by low and buffoonish appendages. Both these kinds of humour were employed in this piece, but occasionally without an attention to their nature. Buffoonery was introduced without an aim and without any possible nature or probability; and the high burlesque was frequently mere grave stupidity and arrant nonsense."

Upon the whole, however, *The Rovers* had a great and uncommon merit, a portion of wit and meaning which would be sought in vain in most other modern plays.

The plot is as follows:

#### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Prior of the abbey of Quedlinburgh—very corpulent and cruel.

Rogero—a prisoner in the abbey, in love with Matilda Pottingen.

Casimere—a Polish emigrant, in Dembrowsky's legion—married to Cecilia, but having several children by Matilda.

Puddingfield and Beefington—English noblemen, exiled by the tyranny of king John, previous to the signature of Magna Charta.

Roderic, Count of Saxe Weimar—a bloody tyrant, with red hair, and amorous complexion.

Gaspar—the minister of the count; author of Rogero's confinement.

Young Pottingen—brother to Matilda.

Matilda Pottingen—in love with Rogero, and mother to Casimere's children.

Cecilia Muckinfeldt—wife to Casimere.

Landlady, waiter, grenadiers, troubadours, &c. &c.

Pantalowsky and Britchiud—children of Matilda, by Casimere.

Joachim, Jabel, and Amarantha—children of Matilda, by Rogero.

Children of Casimere and Cecilia, with their respective nurses.

Several children; fathers and mothers unknown.

The scene lies in the town of Weimar, and the neighbourhood of the abbey of Quedlinburgh.

Time, from the twelfth to the present century.

Rogero, son of the late minister of the count of Saxe Weimar,

having, while he was at college, fallen desperately in love with Matilda Pottingen, daughter of his tutor, Doctor Engelbertus Pottingen, professor of civil law, and Matilda evidently returning his passion, the Doctor, to prevent ill consequences, sends his daughter on a visit to her aunt in Wetteravia, where she becomes acquainted with Casimere, a Polish officer, who happens to be quartered near her aunt's, and has several children by him.

Roderic, prince of Saxe Weimar, a prince of a tyrannical and licentious disposition, has, for his prime minister and favourite, Gaspar, a crafty villain, who had risen to his post by first ruining, and then putting to death, Rogero's father.—Gaspar, apprehensive of the power and popularity which the young Rogero may enjoy at his return to court, seizes the occasion of his intrigue with Matilda, (of which he is apprized officially by Doctor Pottingen), to procure from his master an order for the recal of Rogero from college, and for committing him to the care of the prior of the abbey of Quedlinburgh, a priest, rapacious, savage, and sensual, and devoted to Gaspar's interest;—sending, at the same time, private orders to the prior to confine him in a dungeon.

Here Rogero languishes many years. His daily sustenance is administered to him through a grated opening at the top of a cavern, by the *landlady* of the Golden Eagle, at Weimar, with whom Gaspar contracts, in the prince's name, for his support; intending, and more than once endeavouring, to corrupt the waiter to mingle poison with the food, in order that he may get rid of Rogero for ever.

In the mean time, Casimere, being called away from the neighbourhood of Matilda's residence to other quarters, becomes enamoured of, and marries Cecilia, by whom he has a family, and whom he likewise deserts, after a few years' cohabitation, on pretence of business which calls him to Kamschatka.

Doctor Pottingen, now grown old and infirm, and feeling the want of his daughter's society, sends young Pottingen in search of her, with strict injunctions not to return without her; and to bring with her either her present lover, Casimere, or, should that not be possible, Rogero himself, if he can find him; the Doctor having set his heart upon seeing his children comfortably settled before his death. Matilda, about the same period, quits her aunt's in search of Casimere; and Cecilia having been advertised (by an

anonymous letter), of the falsehood of his Kamschatka journey, sets out in the post-wagon on a similar pursuit.

It is at this point of time the play opens—with the accidental meeting of Cecilia and Matilda, at the inn at Weimar. Casimere arrives there soon after, and falls in first with Matilda, and then with Cecilia. Successive *eclaircissements* take place, and an arrangement is finally made, by which the two ladies are to live jointly with Casimere.

Young Pottingen, wearied with a few weeks' search, during which he has not been able to find either of the objects of it, resolves to stop at Weimar, and wait events there. It so happens that he takes up his lodging in the same house with Puddingfield and Beefington, two English noblemen, whom the tyranny of king John had obliged to fly from their country; and who, after wandering about the continent for some time, had fixed their residence at Weimar.

The news of the signature of Magna Charta arriving, determines Pudd. and Beef. to return to England. Young Pottingen opens his case to them, and entreats them to stay and assist him in the object of his search. This they refuse; but coming to the inn where they are to set off for Hamburgh, they meet Casimere, from whom they had both received many civilities in Poland.

Casimere, by this time, tired of his "Double Arrangement," and having learnt from the waiter that Rogero is confined in the neighbouring abbey *for love*, resolves to attempt his rescue, and to make over Matilda to him as the price of his deliverance. He communicates his scheme to Puddingfield and Beefington, who agree to assist him; as also does young Pottingen. The waiter of the inn, proving to be a *knight templar* in disguise, is appointed leader of the expedition. A band of troubadours, who happen to be returning from the crusades, and a number of Austrian and Prussian grenadiers returning from the Seven Years' war, are engaged as troops.

The attack on the abbey is made with great success. The count of Weimar and Gaspar, who are feasting with the prior, are seized and beheaded in the refectory. The prior is thrown into the dungeon, from which Rogero is rescued. Matilda and Cecilia rush in. The former recognises Rogero, and agrees to live with him. The children are produced on all sides—and young Pottingen is commissioned to write to his father, the Doctor, to detail the joy-



ful events which have taken place, and to invite him to Weimar to partake of the general felicity.

This entertainment is said to be furnished to the theatre by Mr. Colman. For the truth of this we cannot pretend to vouch; but we must confess, that from the description given of the family of *Mr. Bathos* in the first scene, without any previous information on the subject, we should have thought it exceedingly probable, that the piece was from the pen of the author of "*Sylvester Daggerwood*."

THE PROLOGUE.

To lull the soul by spurious strokes of art,  
To warp the genius, and mislead the heart:  
To make mankind revere wives gone astray,  
Love pious sons who rob on the highway;—  
For this the FOREIGN MUSES trod our stage,  
Commanding *German Schools* to be the rage.  
Hail to such schools! Oh, fine *false-feeling*, hail!  
Thou badst *non-natural nature* to prevail;  
Through thee, soft *super-sentiment* arose,  
Musk to the mind, like civet to the nose,  
Till fainting taste (as invalids do wrong),  
Snuff'd the sick perfume, and grew weakly-strong.  
Dear JOHNNY BULL! you boast much resolution,  
With, thanks to heav'n! a glorious constitution:  
Your taste, recover'd half, from foreign quacks  
Takes airings, now, on English horses' backs;  
While every modern bard may raise his name,  
If not on *lasting praise*, on *stable fame*.  
Think that to Germans you have giv'n no check,  
Think how each actor hors'd has risk'd his neck;—  
You've shown them favour: oh, then, once more show it,  
To this night's *Anglo-German, Horse-Play* poet!

As a specimen of the ridicule and sarcasm in this piece, we extract the concluding scene of the first act.

*Scene changes to a subterraneous vault in the abbey of Quedlinburgh; with coffins, 'scutcheons, death's heads, and cross bones.—Toads, and other loathsome reptiles are seen traversing the obscurer parts of the stage.—Rogero appears in chains, in a suit of rusty armour, with his beard grown, and a cap of grotesque form upon his head.—Beside him a crock, or pitcher, supposed to contain his daily*

*allowance of sustenance.—A long silence; during which the wind is heard to whistle through the caverns.—Rogero rises, and comes slowly forward, with his arms folded.*

Eleven years! It is now eleven years since I was first immured in this living sepulchre—the cruelty of a minister—the perfidy of a monk—yes, Matilda! for thy sake—alive amidst the dead—chained—coffined—confined—cut off from the converse of my fellow-men. Soft!—what have we here? (*stumbles over a bundle of sticks.*) This cavern is so dark, that I can scarcely distinguish the objects under my feet. Oh!—the register of my captivity.—Let me see, how stands the account? (*takes up the sticks, and turns them over with a melancholy air; then stands silent for a few moments, as if absorbed in calculation.*)—Eleven years and fifteen days!—Ha! the twenty-eighth of August! How does the recollection of it vibrate on my heart! It was on this day that I took my last leave of my Matilda. It was a summer evening—her melting hand seemed to dissolve in mine, as I prest it to my bosom—some demon whispered me that I should never see her more. I stood gazing on the hated vehicle which was conveying her away for ever.—The tears were petrified under my eyelids.—My heart was crystallized with agony. Anon—I looked along the road. The diligence seemed to diminish every instant. I felt my heart beat against its prison, as if anxious to leap out and overtake it. My soul whirled round as I watched the rotation of the hinder wheels. A long trail of glory followed after her, and mingled with the dust—it was the emanation of divinity, luminous with love and beauty—like the splendor of the setting sun—but it told me that the sun of my joys was sunk for ever. Yes, here in the depths of an eternal dungeon—in the nursing cradle of hell—the suburb of perdition—in a nest of demons, where despair in vain sits brooding over the putrid eggs of hope; where agony woos the embrace of death; where patience, beside the bottomless pool of despondency, sits angling for impossibilities. Yet even *here*, to behold her, to embrace her. Yes, Matilda, whether in this dark abode, amidst toads and spiders, or in a royal palace, amidst the more loathsome reptiles of a court, would be indifferent to me—angels would shower down their hymns of gratulation upon our heads—while fiends would envy the eternity of suffering love. . . . . Soft, what air was that? It seemed a sound of more

than human warblings? Again—(*listens attentively for some minutes*)—Only the wind—it is well, however—it reminds me of that melancholy air which has so often solaced the house of my captivity. Let me see whether the damps of this dungeon have not yet injured my guitar. (*Takes his guitar, tunes it, and begins the following air, with a full accompaniment of violins from the orchestra.*)

SONG BY ROGERO.

Whene'er with haggard eyes I view  
This dungeon, that I'm rotting in,  
I think of those companions true  
Who studied with me at the U—

—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

(*Weeps, and pulls out a blue kerchief, with which he wipes his eyes; gazing tenderly at it, he proceeds—*)

Sweet kerchief, check'd with heav'nly blue,  
Which once my love sat knotting in!—

Alas! Matilda *then* was true!—

At least I thought so at the U—

—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

(*At the repetition of this line Rogero clanks his chains in cadence.*)

Barbs! barbs! alas! how swift you flew  
Her neat post-wagon trotting in!  
Ye bore Matilda from my view.

Forlorn I languish'd at the U—

—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

This faded form! this pallid hue!

This blood my veins is clotting in,  
My years are many—they were few

When first I enter'd at the U—

—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

There first for thee my passion grew,

Sweet! sweet Matilda Pottingen!

Thou wast the daughter of my Tu—

—tor, Law Professor of the U—

—niversity of Gottingen—  
—niversity of Gottingen.

Sun, moon, and thou vain world, adieu,

That kings and priests are plotting in:

Here doom'd to starve on water-gru-

—el\* never shall I see the U—

—niversity of Gottingen!—

—niversity of Gottingen!—

The first act went off exceedingly well. The meeting of Matilda Pottingen and Cecilia Muckenfield, called forth loud bursts of laughter from all parts of the theatre, and the song of the *cap-tive Rogero* about the happy days he passed at the

“ U.

“ niversity of Gottingen,”

told with the happiest effect, and closed the scene with universal applause. The latter part of the romance was not altogether so successful. The force of the satire was not always felt, and in some instances where it was felt, its propriety was not acknowledged. That scene of “ *Pizarro*,” in which *Rolla* releases *Alonzo* from prison, is ridiculed in a manner too plain to be misunderstood. *Casimere*, played by MUNDEN, one of the most laughable of British comedians, releases *Rogero*, performed by LISTON, another droll, by getting into the prison in the disguise of an apothecary, and giving the sentinel (a monk with a firelock) two seven-shilling pieces. The idea was instantly taken, and the scene had a strong effect on the risible muscles of the audience. Laughter, however, is not always a symptom of good humour; and in the present instance, far from proving to be such, it was but the harbinger of loud disapprobation. The romance concludes with a grand battle, in which the last scene of “ *Timour the Tartar*,” is closely imitated and burlesqued, in the first style of extravagance. Basket horses are seen on the ramparts of a castle, and prancing about in all directions. A battering ram is introduced as in “ *Timour*,” and with similar effect. The last scene of *The Exile* is then travestied, and the piece concludes in the *fashionable* style, so that

“ The understanding traces it in vain,  
Lost and bewilder'd in a fruitless search;  
Nor sees with how much art the winding runs,  
Nor where the regular confusion ends.”

\* A manifest error—since it appears from the waiter's conversation that *Rogero* was not doomed to starve on water-gruel, but on peas-soup; which is a much better thing. Possibly the length of *Rogero*'s imprisonment had impaired his memory; or he might wish to make things appear worse than they really were; which is very natural, I think, in such a case as this poor unfortunate gentleman's.

PRINTER'S DEVIL.